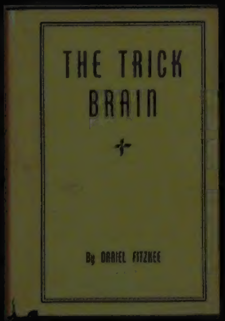
FINDING DARIEL FITZKEE

THE MAN WITH THE TRICK BRAIN

SHOWMANSHIP
FOR
MAGICIANS
By Dariel Fitzkee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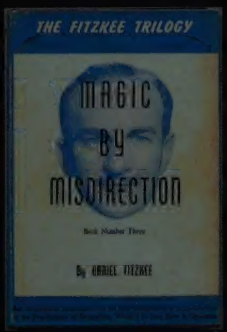
THE FITZKEE TRILOGY
MAGIC
BY
MISDIRECTION
Book Number Three
By Dariel Fitzkee

David R.
Goodsell

Finding Dariel Fitzkee the Man with the Trick Brain

The Fitzkee Trilogy, *Showmanship for Magicians, The Trick Brain,* and *Magic by Misdirection,* are perhaps the most famous, least read classics in magic. However, they have had a continuing influence on countless magicians because of the enduring truths they contain. Many successful magicians point to *Showmanship for Magicians,* in particular, as having influenced their careers for the good. But what was the source of these enduring truths, what motivated Dariel Fitzkee to plumb the depths and explore the boundaries of magic theory at a time when there appeared to be little interest in such studies? The answers lie in his life history, of course:

- He had once been the national first vice president of The Society of American Magicians, but did not become national president. Why not?
- He had been extremely active in San Francisco Bay Area Magic Clubs up until 1940, but was never again mentioned in a club report. Why not?
- Did he dabble in spiritualism?
- He created a full-evening magic revue and took it on the road. But other than in the first volume of his Trilogy, *Showmanship for Magicians*, there is almost no mention of that show in contemporary or recent histories. Why not?
- It has been written elsewhere that he "toured an unsuccessful full-evening magic show... reportedly dropped magic in disgust." Really? Why was it unsuccessful? Was he really disgusted?
- His books are copyrighted to Dariel Fitzroy. Why?
- He wrote book reviews for *Genii* magazine from 1944 until mid-1955 and then dropped out of magic. Why?
- He was an innovator in stage design.
- He became a world famous scientist.
- Who was he? Where did he come from? What kind of a performer was he? What kind of person was he? Did he have a family? What was his profession? How good are his books, really?

That is how biographies come to be written. The author set out to "Find Dariel Fitzkee" – and did.

Finding Dariel Fitzkee
The Man with the Trick Brain

This is number ________ of a limited edition of 500 copies.

Finding Dariel Fitzkee

The Man with the Trick Brain

By David R. Goodsell

David Goodsell

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Dedication

To the memory of my father, Harlan Joseph Goodsell
1906 - 1998
He, like Dariel Fitzkee, was the embodiment
of a Generation of Optimism, of Confidence, of Perseverance,
and of Hope. By example and by precept he set
the standards for my own life —
and to Jann Wherry Goodsell
whose unwavering support
made a life in magic possible.

Foreword

Barrie Richardson

If you think you will find Dariel Fitzkee in this book, you are mistaken. This man is too complicated, conflicted and illusive to describe in total. However, I believe that David Goodsell has come about as close to capturing the life and contributions of this brilliant, multitalented, eccentric, idiosyncratic person as anyone could. You are in for a treat.

This biography is noteworthy for at least four reasons:

First, this book reflects years of research by David. He studied all of Fitzkee's published material, fifteen book and scores of articles and columns as well as his letters, scrapbooks, and photo albums. But he also did primary research by interviewing Fitzkee's family members and the few, surprisingly few, living magicians he could find who knew Dariel Fitzkee. This provided insights that could be gained in no other way. There is nothing "slick" about this book. This is a serious and path-breaking biography that will be the cornerstone for all future research on Fitzkee.

Secondly you will learn how the values, skills, and "mindset" Fitzkee demonstrated as a boy growing up in a small Midwestern town propelled him to excel, but also created problems for him in interacting with others. Dariel demonstrated early on his breadth of interest – sports, music, theater, magic – in all of which he excelled. He was self-motivated, extremely competitive, always disciplined and set high standards for himself and those around him.

The reader will learn how these traits and values made him a highly respected authority on modern magic, a producer of innovative magic shows, a clever performer, and a prolific writer.

The reader will also learn how Fitzkee's singular views on magic – he thought most magic was trivial and was neither memorable nor entertaining – generated bad feelings and resentment. Goodsell objectively presents Fitzkee's classic books, *The Fitzkee Trilogy*, and analyzes many of their key ideas in light of the insights of contemporary writers. He then presents his own conclusions with clarity and civility.

The third aspect I find noteworthy and surprising is that Fitzkee really lived a double life. In the first half of his professional life he made his living by providing theatrical backdrops, curtains, lights and other supplies. When the Depression forced him to close his own business, he worked for others in the same field. Then, for less than one year, he produced a creative and innovative full-evening musical, magic revue. At first highly acclaimed, it eventually failed, and Fitzkee returned to work for an auditorium and theatrical supply firm. While there, throughout World War II, Fitzkee taught himself the science of acoustics, applying what he learned to sound control in the aviation industry as well as school auditoriums and similar structures. After the war he became a technical consultant on acoustics and, amazingly, with only a high school degree, established his own consulting firm and rose to prominence, publishing papers, authoring a book and conducting significant, break-through research in the science of sound and sound control. The St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco is considered a wonder to this day, and Dariel Fitzkee was honored in his later years as a fellow in the Acoustical Society of America.

The last reason I enjoyed this book so much, after I got through the first 25 pages of genealogy and got Dariel born in 1898, is that my father was born in that same year, and this book is not only a biography of Fitzkee's life, but also a way to think about all the major events – i.e., the Roaring 20s, the Great Depression, World War II, post-war prosperity, Korea and so on – that they both lived through. Just think, from men on horseback to space travel, and still much of magic endures.

I doubt if many of us have ever known such a creative, disciplined, enterprising, perfection-seeking, success-oriented character as Dariel Fitzkee, whose very strengths, when carried to professional and personal extremes, became flaws which affected his professional and personal relationships.

This is a wonderful story – and it is True!

Barrie Richardson
June 2008

Preface

David R. Goodsell

In the latter months of 2006, my friend magician Curtis Hickman mentioned that he was embarking on a project involving the famous *Fitzkee Trilogy*. These three books, *Showmanship for Magicians*, *The Trick Brain*, and *Magic by Misdirection*, were written and published in the early 1940s by Dariel Fitzkee, of San Rafael, California. The books, although somewhat controversial, were extremely well received and widely read by magicians hoping to improve their performance skills and the overall quality of their magic. They were remarkable in that *Showmanship for Magicians* and *Magic by Misdirection* are not books about secrets, teaching new tricks and methods, but are books about performance. Although a number of such books have been written in recent years, this was very unusual at the time. *The Trick Brain* is even more unique, in some respects. Two-thirds of the book provides a comprehensive analysis of modern conjuring, its mechanical devices and methods, from the days of Robert-Houdin to the present (1944). Fitzkee concludes that there were 19 basic categories of magic, and he presents the reader with a detailed analysis of each of them. The final third of the book outlines an ingenious method whereby one can utilize Fitzkee's research to invent new tricks. Can creativity be formulated? That is a question hotly debated then and since.

Curtis's initial idea, and a good one, was to prepare an annotated edition of *The Trick Brain*. Sixty years have passed, and thousands of new magic tricks have been invented since the initial publication of *The Trick Brain*. However, those 19 basic categories are still basic, and the many methods and devices that Fitzkee described as part of the analysis of each category remain a remarkable history. An annotated *Trick Brain* would provide valuable fundamentals to 21st-century magicians who too often neglect the history of their craft. I do hope that *The Annotated Trick Brain* eventually comes to be.

As a part of his project plan, Curtis needed an updated biographical profile for Dariel Fitzkee. *The Trilogy* has enjoyed a continual publishing history, first by Fitzkee himself through Saint Rafael House, then by Lloyd Jones's Magic Ltd., and more recently by Lee Jacobs Productions. Each edition contained a short biography with limited information, mostly taken from a 1950s article by the late William Larsen Jr., published in Larsen's magic magazine, *Genii, The Conjurors Magazine*. Knowing that I had a fairly good working library, Curtis asked for some assistance with the project. Since I needed some help with a DVD project and Curtis is a skilled DVD editor, we agreed to swap efforts.

The first thing I discovered was that very little has been written about Dariel Fitzkee after the early 1950s. No one knew very much about him. The standard references, such as Bart Whaley's *Who's Who in Magic*, T.A. Waters' *Encyclopedia of Magic and Magicians*, and even the biographical profiles in J.G. Thompson's *My Best* reveal little. Even John Booth's excellent series of books about magic and magicians reveal nothing. Furthermore, since Dariel Fitzkee died in 1977, almost no one alive has ever met him.

Some 30 hours of page turning in the old magazines, primarily *Genii* and *The Sphinx*, turned up bits and pieces that enabled me to put together a reasonable Fitzkee profile for Curtis – certainly much more complete than what had originally appeared with the books. What I did discover was that Dariel Fitzkee was a remarkable man whose full story, at least as much as it was possible to unearth, deserved to be told. I set out to find Dariel Fitzkee.

This book details my journey and is told from my perspective. I have made every effort at accuracy, and where I have presented my personal analysis of people and events I have tried to make that clear. I have taken very seriously my obligation to the history of magic and to the progeny of Dariel and Marcia Fitzkee.

In the early chapters of this book, the reader will find probably more history of the times and places of Dariel Fitzkee's ancestors than most really care about. As I began the editing process, I started to cut out much of that history. "Consider your readers," I thought. However, I strongly believe that we are who we are in large part because of who our ancestors were. I see much of Dariel's character in the lives of his progenitors – their strength, courage, perseverance, and effort in overcoming incredible hardships. I decided that, in finding Dariel Fitzkee, I first had to find where he came from and who his family were. And I finally realized that I had become attached to the Fitzkee family, an adopted son, even if only in my own eyes. I want people to know his family's history as well as his own. Considering well over a year's worth of research and no little expense, I gave myself permission to include it.

I am now so close to Dariel Fitzkee that I can no longer be objective, and that is a good place to end a book. I left it to more qualified people to edit my grammatical mistakes and help me tighten the text. It needed that. What follows then is the life history of the Dariel Fitzkee I found. I think it is a remarkable story; and if you can enjoy reading it just half as much as I have enjoyed doing the research and writing, I will feel well compensated.

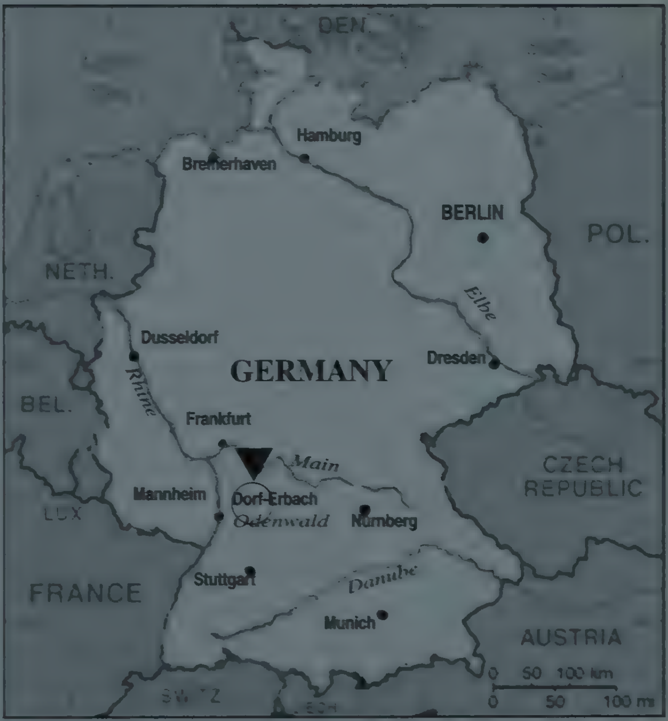
David R. Goodsell
Sundance, Utah,
August 2008

Chapter 1

Build Your House on Rock

What makes a man? Is it genetics; is it environment; is it that subtle, nebulous, subjective thing called heritage – pride of family history, of accomplishment and endurance – that somehow touches us deep in our hearts and for many dictates action or inaction? When I wrote my father's life history, I was entranced by the stories about his father and grandfather and great-grandfather. I often saw parallels between their lives and his, our generations linked by shared characteristics and personality traits. Might that same kind of research not help me know Dariel Fitzkee, to understand the sources of his tenacity, pride, determination, creativity..., a few of the many traits that made him a strong character among his contemporaries?

With the help of many Fitzkees in the United States as well as Germany, I traced Dariel back to the Odenwald, a small mountain chain in southwest Germany bounded on the north and east by the Main River and on the west by the Rhine. It is located primarily in the southern tip of what is now the state of Hesse, but also intrudes east into the northwest bulge of Bavaria. The mountain peaks are low, none higher than 2100 feet, and well forested. Numerous streams and valleys make this a pleasant place to live. Several small towns are particularly picturesque, with Weinheim on the Bergstrase and Michelstadt in the center of the Odenwald being particularly good examples. Their cobbled streets and medieval architecture create an idyllic atmosphere. Such was not the case in 1639 when Martin Fitzky was born in the village of Erbach, about 12 miles south of Michelstadt.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Hamburg
Bremerhaven
BERLIN
POL.
NETH.
Elbe
Dusseldorf
GERMANY
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Rhine
BEL.
Frankfurt
Main
CZECH REPUBLIC
Mannheim
Dorf-Erbach
Odenwald
Nurnberg
LUX
Stuttgart
Danube
FRANCE
Munich
AUSTRIA
0 50 100 km
0 50 100 mi
SWITZ

The area is triangulated between Frankfurt on the northwest, Wurzburg on the east and Mannheim and Heidelberg on the south, all scenes of major battles and ongoing conflict during the Thirty Years War that destroyed much of Germany between 1618 and 1648.

In 1618, Germany was essentially a collection of a few regional powers and a vast number of independent duchies, large and small, ruled over by princes, some 250 in number, as well as numerous free cities, abbeys, and bishoprics. Allegiance was pledged to the Holy Roman Empire, which also included present-day Austria, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Belgium, the Netherlands, as well as large parts of modern Poland, France and Italy.

In the hundred years since Martin Luther initiated what would become known as the Reformation (1517), Lutheran and Calvinist Protestantism swept through the Baltic States and deep into Germany. As a result, much of north and east Germany, as well as many of the major cities, such as Strasbourg, Frankfurt and Nuremberg, became Protestant, while much of the south and west remained Catholic. It was left to the princes to determine what religion would be favored in the lands under their control. Although there were exceptions, between 1550 and 1600, religious tolerance was generally accepted, and minorities of each creed existed almost everywhere. In some lordships and cities the numbers of Lutherans, Calvinists and Catholics were approximately equal.

In the early 1600s, a number of religious and political factors put an end to that tolerance. Recognizing growing religious tension, Protestant leaders formed the League of Evangelical Union in 1608 under the leadership of the Palatine elector Frederick IV, which prompted the formation of the Catholic League under the leadership of Duke Maximilian of Bavaria a year later. Denmark and Sweden, both Lutheran kingdoms, sought to assist the Protestant cause in the Empire and thereby to gain political and economic influence. Spain and France, both Catholic, had similar aims on behalf of their state religions. In 1617, it became clear that young Ferdinand of Bohemia, cousin of the ailing Matthias, King of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperor, would succeed his cousin. Ferdinand, having been educated by the Jesuits, was fiercely Catholic and desired to impose religious uniformity on his lands. However, his own kingdom of Bohemia, largely Protestant, rose in revolt. What began as a local conflict spread throughout Bohemia and into western Germany and Austria. Under duress, Ferdinand, who became emperor of the Empire as Ferdinand II in spite of the protest, called upon his nephew, King Philip IV; and Spanish troops soon occupied the area along the Rhine known as the Palatinate.

Fearing that its sovereignty as a Protestant nation was threatened by recent Catholic successes, Christian IV of Denmark took a mercenary army of 20,000 men into the western German states in 1625. He was forced to retreat by an army at least double that size under the leadership of the Catholic General Albrecht von Wallenstein, the Emperor's general, who carried the conflict north to the Danish border. Under the Treaty of Lübeck in 1629, the Catholic League persuaded the Emperor to take back Lutheran holdings that they felt were rightfully the possession of the Catholic Church.

This action led to renewed foreign intervention, this time by Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, who gathered a large army, subsidized by France, and drove the Catholic army deep into south Germany, regaining much of the occupied Protestant lands. For two years, Gustavus Adolphus achieved success after success. In 1632, in the Battle of Lützon, outmanned nearly two to one, Adolphus and his army faced Wallenstein. Adolphus was killed, but the Swedes, maddened by his loss, rallied to rout the Catholic army. Within two years Wallenstein, suspected of possibly siding with the Swedes, was arrested by order of Ferdinand II and killed by one of his own soldiers.

France, though largely a Catholic country, was a rival of the Holy Roman Empire and Spain and now formally entered the war on the Protestant side. In retaliation, Spain invaded French territory, and the Thirty Years War continued on, year after bloody year, with widespread fighting throughout eastern France, Germany and Austria. Finally, in 1648, the Swedes and the French defeated the imperial army at the Battle of Zusmarshausen and Lens, bringing the war to an end.

The Peace of Westphalia, 1648, refers to a pair of treaties signed in Osnabrück (May 15) and Münster (October 24), towns 50 miles apart. This was necessary because the Protestant and Catholic leaders refused to meet each other and insisted on negotiating from different towns and only through mediators! The treaties provided for territorial adjustments, and the Holy Roman Emperor, now Ferdinand's son, Ferdinand III, was stripped of his power in Germany. The rulers of the many German states were again able to determine the religion of their lands, the options being Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism. However, Christians living in principalities where their denomination was not the established church were guaranteed the right to practice their faith in public during allotted hours and in private at their will.

As in all wars, the price paid by ordinary people was immense. The carnage and the desolation throughout Germany were beyond our modern comprehension and probably greater than men had ever wrought in one generation in any land before. Erbach, in the Odenwald, the village where Dariel Fitzkee's ancestor Martin Fitzky was born, was ravaged time and again by both Catholic and Protestant forces. The area was well within the boundaries of both the Swedish and French interventions, which resulted, of course, in the march of both Catholic and Protestant armies, with attacks and counterattacks. The armies of both sides consisted primarily of mercenaries who cared little, if anything, for Germany, its people, or its history. They were willing to fight for anyone willing to pay the fee and were unhampered by any bonds of law and order. "War is my homeland, my armor is my house, and fighting is my life," was a soldier's saying of the 1600s. This sounds very romantic until one realizes that as the war raged on and years multiplied into decades, the aging mercenary, often underpaid or not paid at all, found himself cold and hungry, subject to disease. As supplies failed he fell upon the population to satisfy his needs. Soldiers were often persuaded to enlist by the promise of the spoils of war, easy booty. Grains and fruits and livestock were appropriated at will for their use, and they were quartered in local homes for months at a time. They considered it their right to plunder and even rape and kill. Bands of mercenaries vandalized homes and farms, destroying furniture, farm tools, and anything the common people used to earn a living. They slaughtered what domestic animals they did not take with them, ruined stores and seeds, tortured or killed the citizens and burned the farms. Crops freshly planted or ready for harvest were deliberately trampled down by the armed plunderers or military detachments on the march, often accompanaied by the senseless killing of the village inhabitants.

It was not uncommon for money and supplies to be in short supply at the onset of winter. With no quarters available, mercenary units were often simply demobilized and turned loose on the countryside where they banded together as marauders, plundering without mercy. In time the peasants could take no more and organized their own bands, ambushing wandering mercenaries and meting out their own cruelties. Both sides were equally vicious in their treatment of one another. The result, especially in the latter years of the war, was that thousands of acres of good farm land lay untilled, resulting in hunger, if not famine. In some places, there were no men to farm them; in others, the populace had simply given up. In some cases the people were reduced to eating horses, dogs, cats, and rats. There were accounts of bodies being exhumed and sold for food. Magdeburg, Heidelberg, Wurzburg and other great cities lay in ruins. Rotting carcasses, refuse and offal

Hereditory palace of the Count of Erbach.

filled the streets and poisoned the air and water. Typhus, typhoid, dysentery, scurvy and even the plague swept through the countryside. People fought for food and water, striking out in fear and need and self-preservation. Humanity was at a low ebb, and mistrust and hate overpowered friends and family.

The results were devastating. Will Durant, in his monumental *The Story of Civilization* reports in volume 7 that moderate estimates for Germany and Austria show a reduction in total population by one third, from 21,000,000 to 13,500,000. Of 35,000 villages in Bohemia at the start of the war, 29,000 were deserted during the conflict. Hundreds of villages were left without a single inhabitant. In some parts of Germany, including the area of Odenwald, the cost in human life reached as high as 65%. Durant also reports that after the war the people in some areas were encouraged to live polygamous lives, because of the dearth of adult males.

It is likely that Martin and his family suffered terribly. As indicated, Martin Fitzky was born in Erbach in 1639 in the midst of this desolation and despair. As early as 1621, his parents, if they were living in the Odenwald at that time, would have tasted war when Catholic Croatians launched a surprise attack on Erbach, bringing war directly to the region. Since he was given the name Martin, it is probable that his family was Lutheran. We do not know if his mother and father were originally from the Odenwald or if, perhaps seeking acceptance of their Lutheran faith, they moved to the protection of the Count of Erbach, who was known to be Lutheran and who, as was the custom, had compelled almost all of the inhabitants of his lands to convert to Lutheranism. We do not know if Martin's father was a day laborer, a farmer, or perhaps a soldier. We do not know if he survived the war. We do know that if he was anything like his descendent Dariel, he would have stood firm in his beliefs and would have been among those who fought back against marauders and vandals.

We can be relatively sure that he and his family suffered from hunger and illness, perhaps losing family members to disease and starvation or even mercenaries. But we also know that they must have had a degree of toughness about them, sturdy and resolute in the face of adversity, that enabled them to survive when probably half or more of their acquaintances perished. We do not know when or where Martin Senior died. Fortunately, we do know a considerable amount about his posterity through the efforts of the Fitzky family in Dorf-Erbach, Germany, who published *The Fitzky Chronicles*, an excellent genealogical monograph about the family and the source of much of the family information prior to 1832 that appears here.

Martin and his wife had a son, also named Martin, who was born in 1670. Near the end of the 17th century, Martin Junior and his wife, Elisabeth, were living in an inoperative sawmill in the village of Erbach. This mill stood at the sight of a spring which flowed into the calcareous underground and resurfaced at the Stockheimer Mill in nearby Michaelstadt. Perhaps the old mill had been abandoned near the end of the Thirty Years War; perhaps it was simply unprofitable. In any case, the enterprising couple made a home of the old building. It is suspected that Martin Junior worked as a day laborer on surrounding farmsteads while he became established. That he was both industrious and successful is obvious from the fact that he eventually became a city councilman and likely a popular member of the village community. The city council was the governing body for the community, addressing such issues as the cultivation of land with regard to three-crop rotation, law and order, who should become mayor, and decisions regarding common income and expenditures. Further documents in the village records show that Martin was appointed Wartemeister, a supervisory position probably related in some way to town defense, raising the alarm in cases of attack by vagabonds and stray bands of roving mercenaries, and possibly organizing a town militia of sorts. This was an important position. For example, as recently as 1688, Heidelberg Castle, on the edge of the Odenwald, was destroyed by soldiers traveling through the area on their way back to France. One never knew when something like that would happen. Although the war was over, the times remained dangerous.

Sometime after the turn of the century Martin Junior learned the traditional art of weaving fine linen fabric and yarn from flax fibers as originally introduced into Germany through what is now Czechoslovakia. Martin Junior's wife, Elisabeth, gave birth to a son on June 22, 1699. He was baptized two days later and named after his godfather, Johann Balser Giebenhain, who was the mayor of Dorf-Erbach, which is now a part of Erbach itself. Johann Balser Fitzky learned the art of weaving linen from his father. In nearby Stockheim, there was a fabric factory and it is likely that the Fitzkys contracted with that factory to supply finished linen fabric. Johann also joined his father as town watchman. Dangerous times continued, and decisions whether to take up arms or to go into hiding were often matters of life and death.

Sometime around 1722, Johann Balser Fitzky married his wife, Maria, and the couple had three sons, Johann Peter, Johann Leonhard, and Johann Jakob. By 1742, Johann Balser was in a position to buy a few pieces of farmland, and the purchasing contracts are still in the possession of the Fitzky family in Dorf-Erbach. It is recorded that half the purchase price for an acre of land was paid in cash in 1742 and the rest in three yearly installments. Later in 1742, Johann Balser Fitzky purchased a second acre, and two years later he purchased "a meadow," followed by additional property in 1746 and 1747. Clearly, Johann Balser Fitzky was prominent in his community.

According to tradition, Johann Peter, Johann Balser's oldest son, stood to inherit the family homestead. He married his wife, Anna Katharina, in 1750. *The Fitzky Chronicles*, prepared by the Fitzky family in Erbach, Germany, indicate that the other two brothers left home, and their fate is unknown. It is likely that the homestead was too small to support more than one family.

From 1756 to 1763, war once again dominated central Europe, including northern Germany, Austria, Prussia, the Russian Empire, Sweden, and France. (This same war spilled over into the American colonies as the French and Indian Wars.) Fortunately, most of the actual warfare was carried out north and east of the Odenwald. However, the Duke of Erbach participated in this war with his own soldiers, and it is possible that the two younger brothers were a part of that force. Given their ages (both in their thirties), however, it is more likely that they simply left the town for destinations unknown – perhaps the American Colonies. In 1751, on November 29, the only child of Johann Peter and Anna Katharina was born. Their son was named Johann Leonhard Fitzky, after his uncle. Sometime around 1760, Johann Peter took over the family farm.

From his father, Johann Leonhard learned to farm the land and also the art of weaving linen. On November 6, 1773, Johann Leonhard married Anna Margarethe Haus-

The original farm house built by Johann Leonhard II around 1800. Once surrounded by farm land, it is now in the center of town.

kin (or Hauck). Together, Johann Peter and Johann Leonhard Fitzky laid the cornerstone for the Fitzky farmstead still standing today in the center of Dorf-Erbach. By 1796, as *The Chronicles* suggest, with industry and frugality, and perhaps with the wife's dowry, they built first the barn and stables. At this time, the Fitzkys were still living in the old mill into which the family had moved 100 years before. In 1800, the new house was built. However, Johann Leonhard Fitzky fell into a lime pit during the construction of the house and died as a result of the accident.

Margarethe Fitzky, widow of the unfortunate Johann Leonhard, was by all accounts a spirited and capable woman. At the time of her husband's death she had six children, ranging in age from 23 to ten years of age. Johann Adam, born November 22, 1777, Johann, born February 1, 1786, Anna Katharina, born in 1783, Maria, born June 25, 1780, Johann Leonhard II, who would eventually inherit the farmstead, born April 4, 1789, and Georg, born in 1890 or 1891. Somehow this stalwart woman managed to maintain the farmstead while raising the children.

The first years of the 19th century found central Europe in turmoil once again. While Count Franz I of Erbach remained personally sovereign until 1823, his county, together with 22 other formerly sovereign domains, was integrated by Napoleon in 1803 into the territory of the former Landgrave (ruler of lands) of Hesse, which in turn was upgraded to become the Grand Duchy of Hesse-Darmstadt. This is how Napoleon obligated the German princes to have loyalty toward him, while forcing them to provide soldiers for his campaigns. We know from *The Fitzky Chronicles* that Johann Leonhard II was part of the 400,000-strong army that Napoleon took to Moscow in 1812.

Napoleon's primary enemy was Great Britain. In 1806, Napoleon instituted a Continental Blockade which forbade European countries under Napoleon's control or influence to trade with Britain, and through diplomatic efforts he persuaded Russia to join that blockade. By 1810, England was in the midst of a severe depression resulting in considerable internal strife, and the blockade seemed to be succeeding in that respect, although France did suffer from reverse effects of the blockade as well. Alexander, Czar of Russia, grew troubled by Napoleon's political actions in Poland, then a French protectorate. A series of political actions of his own culminated in May 1812, in his declaration that all Russian ports were to be open to ships of all nations. By this action, he effectively withdrew from the Continental Blockade and declared war on France.

Both Russia and France recognized that war was inevitable before this, however, and military preparations had begun in 1810. By early June, 1812, Napoleon had gathered his main army, over 400,000 strong, in eastern Poland and Prussia, and on June 27 he began the long trek to Moscow, 550 miles away. Less than half of his troops were French. The rest were contingents requisitioned from the empire, including around 200,000 from Germany. Among them was young Johann Leonhard Fizky II.

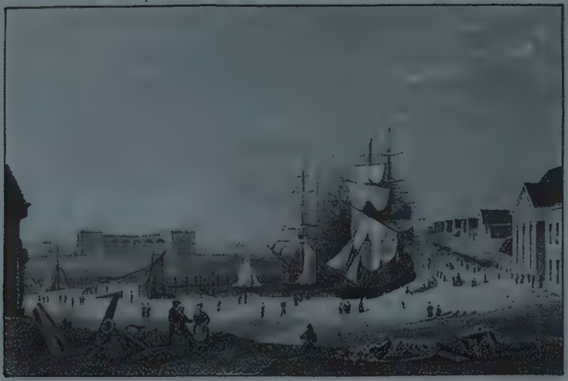
The road to Moscow was one of the great military disasters of all time. Only two major battles were fought during that campaign, with no significant winner of either of them. The Russians assumed a policy of retreat, even from Moscow itself, and waited for the combined forces of nature and the fallacy of trying to supply a fighting army over a distance of 500 miles to take their toll. By the time Napoleon reached Moscow his force had been reduced to fewer than 100,000 men. Only about 50,000 had died in battle, the rest had fallen to disease, death, or desertion. Moscow offered no relief, for, on the night of their arrival, September 14, 1812, Moscow began to burn. There was no food; there were no supplies. Napoleon had no choice but to turn back. It was a strategic defeat of huge proportions.

The way back was even more treacherous. On October 19, 50,000 soldiers and another 50,000 non-combatants began to file out of Moscow. As the retreat progressed, the weather worsened. Snow fell, the temperature plunged to well below freezing. Stores of supplies along the way, which Napoleon had planned on, had been lost through Cossack raids and local theft. As French numbers fell, the Russians, sensing victory, gave chase. By December 13, when they crossed into Poland and Prussia, Napoleon had only 27,000 soldiers left. Of approximately 200,000 troops from the Confederation of the Rhine, including Bavaria, Westphalia and Saxony and other German states, around 90 percent, or 180,000, were lost. Remarkably, Johann Leonhard Fitzky II returned home.

The Napoleonic Wars once again drained south Germany of men and materials. Prussia, who began the wars aligned with Napoleon, contributed few troops and was relatively untouched by the wars. Prussia signed peace treaties with Russia in 1812, after Napoleon's failure in Moscow. In the years following Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, Prussia emerged as the dominant military power in Europe. Prussian soldiers often traveled through the German states of Bavaria and Hesse, where the Odenwald is located, at first looking to punish former soldiers of Napoleon's armies and later to recruit able-bodied men to serve in their own army. We are told that Johann Leonhard managed to elude the Prussians in the years after the Russian campaign and that the Prussians were a concern to him and his family. Perhaps this uncertainty played a role in his personal life, for he did not marry Elisabetha Katharina Kumpf until 1819, when he was 30 years of age. Other questions remain unanswered. Did Johann Leonhard's older brothers, and in particular Johann Adam, also serve in the French army? Adam would have been about the right age in 1803, when Napoleon integrated the German states into his empire. We do not know. We do know that he was married by 1806, so perhaps he avoided military service altogether. In any case, as Johann Adam Fitzky and his wife, Anna Maria Daum, raised their children in Dorf-Erbach during the first quarter of the 19th century, they must have wondered what the future would hold for themselves and their children. The economy remained unstable as first the princes and then the Prussian government levied harsh taxes on the citizens. It had taken 60 or more years for many of the small farms to reclaim titles to their lands after the wars of the mid-1700s. Even though the Prussian authorities were interested in some social reform and education was a high priority, social and economic conditions were harsh, and while a judicial system had been established providing for citizens' rights, if a citizen was wronged by government, it was very difficult to achieve justice. How could people bear such conditions?

Many emigrants were limited to what they could carry by cart or horseback.

Primarily for religious reasons, small groups of Germans left their homeland to better themselves in the American colonies, in particular Pennsylvania. Their letters gave witness to fair success in the new world, giving examples of relatives and friends who gained farms of several hundred acres, free of taxes and services, after a few years of hard work. This obvi-

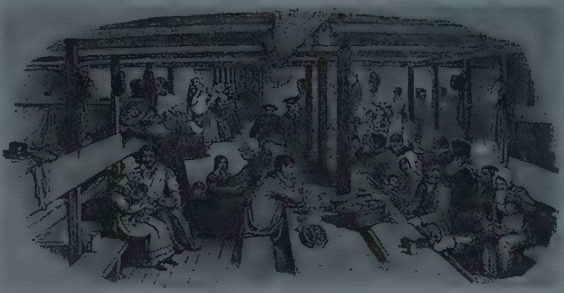


The German port city of Bremerton in the early 1800s.

ously encouraged others to follow them. In 1829, Gottfried Duden, a German visitor to America, published his book about his travels to North American and in particular those areas settled by German immigrants. He described spectacular harvests as well as the intellectual freedom enjoyed by people living there. The book sold in large numbers; and, although the emphasis was on lands along the Missouri River, the book persuaded thousands of Germans to emigrate, many of them simple but educated farmers and farm laborers.

A particularly choice area for German immigrants was the Susquehanna valley of Pennsylvania, southeast of Philadelphia. In that valley, the county of York, lying about thirty miles from present-day Harrisburg and about a hundred miles from Philadelphia, with the Susquehanna River running along its northern border, became a favored area for immigrants from the small community of Dorf-Erbach, and some 106 of them emigrated between 1830 and 1832. But that was but a small part of the estimated 40,000 residents that lived in York County at that time.

Did the Fitzkys correspond with friends or relatives who had emigrated to Pennsylvania? Did they read Gottfried Duden's enticing book? We cannot know, of course, other than that we have found no record of Fitzkys living in America at that time. What we do know is that Johann Adam Fitzky was 55 years of age in 1832. It is likely that he and his family lived in the old mill, where Fitzkys had lived since the 1600s. As Johann Adam's oldest sons grew to manhood, they must have questioned the wisdom of trying to scratch out a living in a land impoverished by continual warfare. Since Germany was one of the most literate of European countries, undoubtedly Johann Adam or his sons had read about democracy in America, the land of opportunity. Perhaps it was Georg Adam who persuaded his father, Johann Adam Fitzky, to take the family to America. He was single at the time of their emigration and no doubt anxious for opportunity and adventure. Or maybe it was Simon who encouraged emigration. Simon might well have been betrothed at that time to Sophia Eickel, who lived with her parents in the nearby town of Darmstadt. The Eickel family immigrated about the same time as the Fitzkys. Perhaps Simon believed that in America he would be able to provide more for his wife than what the Odenwald had to offer. In any case, it must have been an emotional decision. On the one hand, the family had a long history of sacrifice and hard work in efforts to improve as individuals and as a family; on the other hand, emigration would break up two hundred years of family community. It is difficult for us today to realize the finality of such a decision. But perhaps it was Johann Adam himself, the patriarch of the Fitzky line, who persuaded his wife and family to adventure to America. *The Fitzky Chronicles* tell us that Johann Adam, Johann and sister Anna emigrated to America where they were lost to the family. We find no records of Johann or Anna in America, and wonder if they left earlier, never arrived, or perhaps ended up in Canada or elsewhere. Family legend has it that Anna died unmarried in America. As we will see, Johann Adam Fitzky was anything but lost. Georg had married and moved to Wertheim, Maria was married, and Johann Leonhard II and his wife, Elisabetha, were living on the farmstead in 1832 along with Johann Adam and his family. The farmstead was small, too small for two large families. Johann Leonhard II became heir to



Traveling in steerage meant sharing quarters with several dozen other passengers.

the property and although Johann Adam might have been able to earn a living as a blacksmith he was unlikely to ever be able to own enough land to provide a future for his children. Consequently, the extended family agreed that Johann Adam would sell the old mill and use the money to take his family to America.

Emigration was physically taxing. The nearest port city was either Bremerton, over 100 miles to the north of Dorf-Erbach, or perhaps Hamburg, even further. Just the trip to the port city would be an ordeal. Did they go by horse-drawn wagon or did they pull a handcart? Did they travel by themselves or did two or three other families accompany them? What could they have taken? What must they have left behind? Surely there was some legacy from previous generations, although many of items of value would have been plundered by soldiers during the course of many wars.

Travel would most likely be by sailing ship, since steam-assisted sailing ships were in their infancy. Illustrations in popular magazines and newspapers of the day tended to romanticize life on board an emigrant ship. Depending on the weather, and the nature of the captain and the crew, the crossing could be relatively uneventful or turbulent and even tragic, taking several weeks. Most early emigrant ships were originally cargo ships, and passengers traveling at the cheapest rate, as would be the Fitzkys, were placed in the cargo hold, or steerage, located between the main deck and a lower deck. The ceiling height was usually 6 to 8 feet, with a row of bunks running down each side of the deck. These were ordinarily positioned so that the passengers lay in the direction of the ship, fore and aft. The larger ships might have an additional row of bunks down the middle. Each row consisted of double bunks, over and under, and each bunk, designed to hold four or five adults, was equipped with a mattress stuffed with straw. Passengers were expected to provide their own bedding. A narrow corridor ran between the bunks and in front of them was a small space for eating. In many cases the cost of a ticket included only water and wood for cooking, and families were expected to provide their own food. Of course, port town merchants offered such provisions at a profit. Passengers had to prepare their meals in galleys placed on deck. With only two or three of these available, the lines for preparing food were often long. Obviously, if the weather was bad, passengers had to resort to cold food such as biscuits and dried beef.

It was not unusual for families to run out of food before the end of the trip, stretching scraps as far as they could. It was also not unusual for passengers to be plagued by seasickness, or worse – cholera, typhoid fever, measles and dysentery. And, unfortunately, death was not uncommon, especially for children and infants. For the most part, though, bad air, lice, and fleas were the primary sources of discomfort.

The Fitzky gravesite in Dorf-Erbach, Germany.

Chapter 2

America, Land of Promise

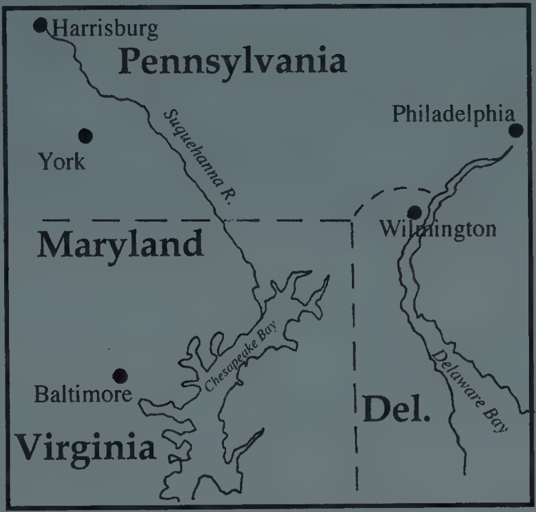
The American Fitzkee saga begins in 1832, when Johann Adam Fitzky, his wife, Anna, and five of their children emigrated to the United States, probably arriving in Philadelphia or possibly Baltimore. German emigration records verify this, listing Johann Adam and his wife and five children, although the forenames of his wife and children are not listed.

Johann Adam Fitzky was born November 22, 1777, and married Anna Maria Daum sometime around 1805. As indicated earlier, he apparently earned his living as a blacksmith in Dorf-Erbach prior to his emigration. Adam, as he was known, and Anna appear to have had at least eight and possibly ten children between 1807 and 1826. These included Johann Simon, born 28 April 1807; Georg (or Johann) Adam, born 29 January 1809; Johann Georg, born 24 January 1812, but who died in 1814; Elisabetha, born 27 December 1813; Augusta Sophia, born 25 February 1816; twin girls born 12 June 1818 and who presumably were still-born; Anna Maria, born 12 June 1820, and who died 16 days later; Elizabeth Barbara, born 14 March 1823 and Johann Leonhardt, born 23 May 1826 and who died nine days later. Therefore, our genealogical research indicates that Johann Adam and his wife had five living children in 1832: Simon, Adam, Elisabetha, Augusta Sophia, and Elizabeth Barbara (Elise or Elisa).

The fertile countryside of eastern Pennsylvania as well as the thriving, bustling cities of Philadelphia and Harrisburg, were popular among German immigrants, and tens, perhaps hundreds, of thousands settled there. As recorded earlier, the German emigration records show that 106 people emigrated from the small town of Dorf-Erbach, Germany, between the years of 1830 and 1833, and that in 1832, Johann Adam Fitzky and his family emigrated from that town. We know that the state government in Hesse, which includes the Dorf-Erbach area, encouraged emigration because of the poor economic conditions of the times, but we do not know what specifically led the Fitzkys, and quite probably several other families from Dorf-Erbach and surrounding towns, to York County. In any case it was a good choice, both for the beauty of the countryside and the opportunities the area provided.

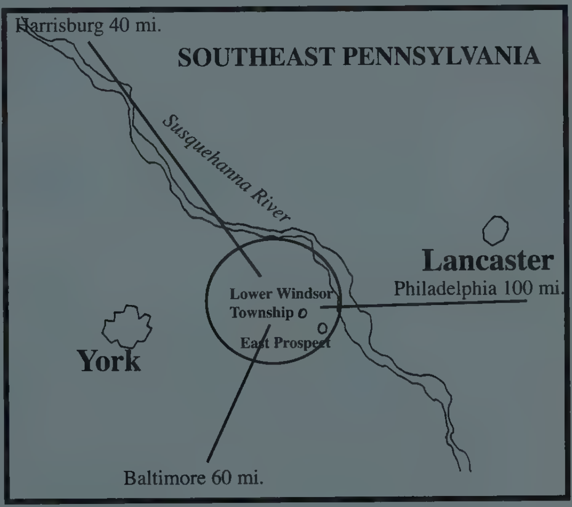
None of the five children are named, and it took a bit of detective work to determine exactly who did emigrate with Johann Adam Fitzky's family. There is a clear certainty from York County records that Simon, Georg Adam, Augusta Sophia, and Elizabeth Barbara immigrated, for we have records of their marriages and the births of their children. But our research did not turn up any reference to Elisabetha in either America or Germany, except for her birth date, January 1816, in Dorf-Erbach. Was she one of the five children who made the trip? Ruling out all other possibilities we explored, we conclude that she was, although we must leave it to future genealogists to track her family.

The first records we have of Johann Adam Fitzky and his family in the United States are found in church records for the Canadochly Lutheran and Reformed Congregation Church in Lower Windsor Township. The word "Canadochly" is a corruption of the Indian word "Conejohela," the Indian name for the valley where Lower Windsor is located. On 15 May 1834, Adam Fitzky (that would be Johann Adam Fitzky, the father), Simon, Adam, and Sophia took communion in that old church. Sophia could have been either Augusta Sophia, the sister of Simon and Adam, or Catherine Sophia, Simon's wife, if they were married by that date.

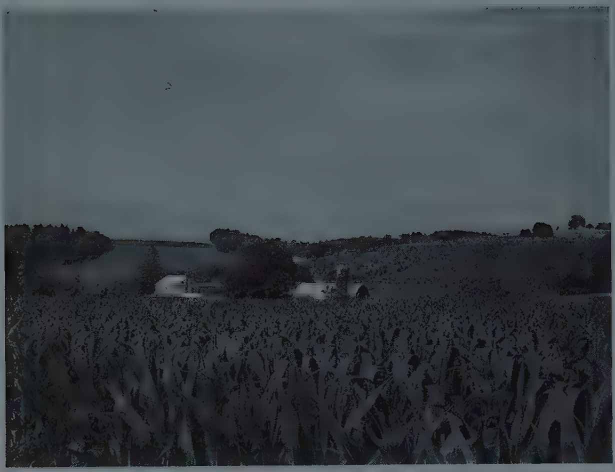


The Sophia who became Simon's wife was Catherine Sophia Eickel, who immigrated with her parents, John and Catherine (we do not know if there were siblings), from Darmstadt around the same time as the Fitzkys. Darmstadt is a town not far from Dorf Erbach, so it is possible that the Fitzkys knew the Eickels in Germany prior to emigration. Catherine Sophia and Augusta Sophia, only two months apart in age, were good friends in Lower Windsor Township and might possibly have been so in Germany. Records show that Simon and Sophia were married "about 1835" and that their first child, Maria Catherine (obviously named after Sophia's mother) was born 21 May 1835.

The sister, Augusta Sophia Fitzky, married John Becker, a German, sometime in 1834. So, while one Sophia was adding "Fitzky" to her name, the other was replacing "Fitzky" with "Becker" at about the same time. Either one could have been taking communion that May morning.



What the Fitzkys found in York County must have seemed a land of plenty. Communities were well established, with general stores, blacksmith shops, tanneries, and the like, and the town of York was a thriving farming and commercial hub. Homes, while mostly modest, were well kept, and farms were fruitful, with produce as well as apple orchards native to the area. Settlers harvested other natural resources, as well, such as timber, iron ore, and limestone. In fact, York County limestone would take the blue ribbon at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. The county also became a prosperous tobacco center, producing as much as one-third of all the cigars made in the United States. Perhaps because other immigrants from Dorf-Erbach had done so, the Fitzkys settled in Windsor Township, located between York and the Susquehanna River town of East Prospect. Six years later, in 1838, the area in which they lived would be divided off from Windsor Township to become Lower Windsor Township, comprising about 25 square miles that slope gently eastward towards the Susquehanna and have many small creeks and streams that drain into the river. This was one of the



Farmland in York County, Pennsylvania was, and is, some of the most fertile on the East Coast.

earliest regions in the area to be settled and boasted some of the first colonial settlements west of the Susquehanna.

There was ample employment for able-bodied men willing to work as farm laborers or in trades at which they might be skilled. We do not know what resources Johann Adam might have had as a result of selling the old mill in Dorf-Erbach. Perhaps he was able to purchase some land; perhaps he, too, worked as a farm laborer. We do know that both the sons, Simon and Georg Adam, worked as farm laborers most of their lives, although Simon is listed in the 1870 census as a farmer with property valued at $1500. Georg Adam is listed as a retired farmer in the same census, with property valued at $1000, and living with his son, also named Adam.

By and large those were prosperous times for York County residents and an exciting time to be a new resident of America. During the first half of the 19th century, the area was primarily an agricultural community of rolling hills, rivers and streams, and wooded areas. But in 1825, the first iron steamboat had been tested on the Susquehanna. A canal connected the county seat of York with the river, and by 1840, the city had become a railroad hub, as well. The industrial revolution was just beginning, and the next three decades during which the Fitzkys would establish themselves in their new land saw changes in their own way as dramatic as the electronic information age of today. The French author Alexis de Toqueville visited America in the mid-1830s. In his book *Democracy in America,* he wrote, "In America men are nearer equality than in any other country in the world... a remarkable equality of opportunity." This spirit of democracy was carried forward by the new American culture of transcendentalism espoused by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller, stressing self-reliance and the human capacity for good.

This was heady stuff in the 1830s. Many comforts of life we take for granted today were just beginning to emerge, and during those years, a number of inventions and discoveries improved the standard of living. The John Deere steel-blade plow and the McCormick mechanical reaper revolutionized farming, as recorded in the first nationwide farm journal, *The Cultivator*, published in 1834. The modern sewing machine was invented, as well as the telegraph with its Morse code. Remarkably, in 1844, lines strung between Washington D.C. and Baltimore could transmit a message in seconds and before 1860 would send messages not only across the nation but also from Queen Victoria in England to Washington D.C. through a trans-Atlantic cable. Other inventions included methods for producing inexpensive steel, as well as commercial uses of rubber. Factories and mills mechanized and housewives were able to preserve foods in Mason jars with screw top caps that greatly eliminated spoilage. Although then, as now, the national economy suffered setbacks, such as the panics of 1837 and 1857, the general sense was one of prosperity, and those economic trials did not affect farming communities as much as they did merchants.

Prosperity brought a demand for improved working conditions championed by influential reform groups and fledgling labor unions. A ten-hour maximum workday was established, the need for which seems so strange to us today. Reformers espoused women's rights, the beginning of efforts that would still require eighty years to establish a constitutional right for women to vote. And, of course, by the 1850s, the issue of slavery that would soon divide the nation became the focus of every penny newspaper and debate from Congress to town meetings. We do not know the extent to which these issues touched the Fitzkys and their friends, but it cannot be denied that they must have felt the energy surging through the nation.

As Johann Adam and his wife, Anna, watched their sons and daughters marry and raise their own families they must have marveled at their good fortune and the wisdom of their decision to venture across the ocean. America was their home now, the home of their posterity, and like hundreds of thousands of other immigrants, they sought to make it official. In the 1830s, the standard procedure for becoming a citizen was to file a declaration of intent any time after residing within the United States for at least five years (although some agencies were lax on this requirement). Then, naturalization usually occurred at least two years after declaration. With rare exceptions, women were not naturalized prior to 1923, when the passage of the 19th amendment granted women the right to vote. Simon was the first of the Fitzkys to initiate naturalization. He filed intent on 28 May 1836, and became a citizen on 18 September 1838. It interesting that the others did not file at the same time. For whatever reasons it was not until 15 October 1840 that Adam Fitzky (Johann Adam) filed his intent, which was not finalized until 17 September 1844, and Georg Adam finally filed on 8 August 1844, and was finalized four years later, on 6 November 1848.

This poor quality daguerreotype was simply labeled Fitzky Men. We think they are, from left: Georg Adam, Dariel's great grandfather; Simon, Georg Adam's brother; and Johann Adam, Dariel's great, great grandfather. Compare Georg Adam's face with that of Dariel on page 112.

By this time a cousin, Peter Wilhelm Fitzky, had emigrated from Baden, Germany, settled in Lower Windsor and married Clara Rosina Baringerin in Philadelphia. He initiated naturalization 6 December 1852 and finalized it 25 August 1856. Peter Wilhelm, who went by William, and his family were close to the other Fitzkys. We know this because in the church records he appears as sponsor for the baptisms of some of his cousin's children, and in the 1880 census we find that in his old age Georg Adam was living with Peter and his family.

Census records are interesting because their accuracy depends on the diligence and care of the census taker, whose interpretation, particularly of names, can alter and thus confuse the ancestral lines. In the 1840 census, we find only Simon Fitzkee listed and note this is the first instance of the double "ee" spelling of the name Fitzky. Previous church and naturalization records listed various spellings, such as Fitzky, Fitskey, and Fitzkey. But starting in 1841, the church register lists the double "ee" spelling for the name, which became standard from that time forward. Georg Adam and his wife, Sarah, appeared regularly in the church register from 1839 on as their children were born, so we are confident that Georg Adam and his family were living in Lower township in 1840, since they reappear in the 1850 census. We suspect they simply were overlooked in the 1840 census process.

Between 1835 and 1853, the church records for the Canadochy Lutheran and Reformed Church trace the growth of Georg Adam's and Simon's two families. Georg Adam Fitzky met and courted Sarah Catherine McElheney and the two were wed on 9 October, 1836. Although the records leave some doubt, they appear to have had several children, namely: John Wright, born 2 April 1839; Johann Adam (known later as Adam G.), born 19 October 1840; Mary Anna, born 18 December 1843; and Henry, born 7 November 1846;

Simon and Sophia had possibly ten children: Maria Catherine, born 15 March 1835; Johannes B (known as John S.), born 15 October 1836; George Adam, born 29 April 1838; Johann William, born 17 October 1840; Adam, born 8 November 1842; Elizabeth, born 26 June 1846; Augusta Sophia, born 15 July 1848; Amelia, born 26, December 1850 and Henry Franklin, born August 18 1853.

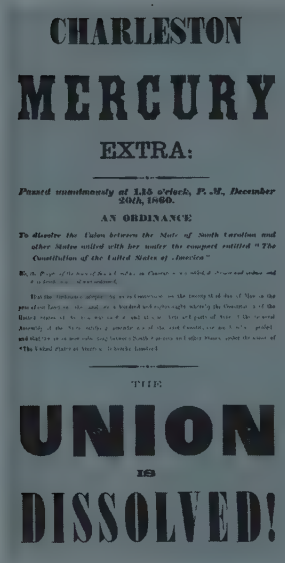
Chapter 3

John Wright Fitzkee and the Great Rebellion

John Wright Fitzky, the oldest child of Georg Adam and Sarah McElheney, was born April 2, 1839. As the oldest he would have been expected to help his father with chores around the home. While Georg Adam might have had a small farmstead at the time, it did not provide for the total support of his family. In the 1850 census, we find him listed as a laborer, which probably meant that he worked on surrounding farms. John Wright was 12 at the time, and we learn that sometime early in the next decade he was apprenticed as a carpenter for a period of seven years. Apprenticeship was the usual procedure for learning a trade, a form of on-the-job training. In the 1850s, when John Wright would have been a teenager, he would likely have been formally indentured to a local master carpenter. The master would promise to teach and instruct, or cause the apprentice to be instructed, in the art, trade, or calling of a house-carpenter, which probably included cabinet making and wood working in general. There was always a caveat – "If said apprentice be capable to learn." Often the apprentice would live in the master's household and meals would be provided. The apprentice would receive no pay during his apprenticeship, but would learn the trade while working for the master. The apprentice system, and especially the indentured apprentice system where the youth was dependent on the master for room and board, was open to abuse and exploitation. This was not likely to be the case in a close community like Lower Windsor Township. John Wright learned his trade well and in his later years was known as a master carpenter in his own right.

We do not know if he resided at home or with his master, but it was not uncommon for youths, boys and girls, to live with neighbors, especially as part of a work relationship. The 1850 census, for example, shows that two of Simon Fitzkee's children, John S, age 16, and Catherine, age 14, were living in the John Gilbert household, adjacent to the Fitzkee farmstead. Why, we do not know. Perhaps they were working for the Gilberts. Perhaps the Fitzkee home was too small to accommodate the whole family. Like his brother Adam, Simon was listed in that census as a laborer. Interestingly, we do not find their father, Johann Adam Fitzkee, listed in the census. He would have been 73 years of age, and it is probable that he was deceased. We do not find any reference to their mother, Anna, and in fact our genealogy searches do not show Anna Fitzkee mentioned other than as wife of Johann Adam when he emigrated. Neither do we have cemetery information on either of them. It is entirely possible that Johann Adam's wife, Anna, died at sea or shortly afterwards. We also do not find Georg Adam's wife, Sarah Catherine McElheney, listed after the birth of Catharine Fitzkee on 18 November 1847. She is not listed in the 1850 census.

These are genealogical mysteries that must be left to others to solve.



CHARLESTON

MERCURY

EXTRA:

Passed unanimously at 1.15 o'clock, P. M., December 20th, 1860.

AN ORDINANCE

To dissolve the Union between the State of South Carolina and other States united with her under the compact entitled "The Constitution of the United States of America."

THE

UNION

IS

DISSOLVED!

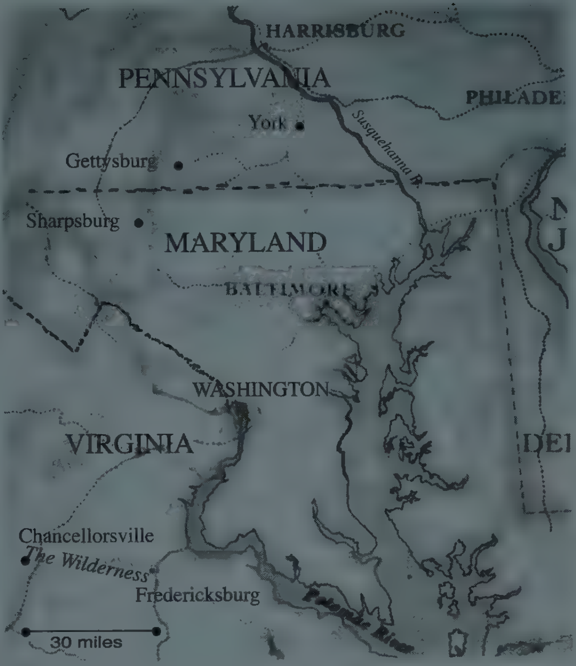
South Carolina announced its secession on December 20, 1860, in broadsides, such as this one.In just six weeks the other southern states had followed South Carolina's lead.

The 1860s opened with the nation facing the impending crisis of "A House Divided" that had been the focus of heated debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas as the previous decade came to an end. In November of 1860, Lincoln became the 16th President with less than 40 percent of the popular vote. Less than a month later, South Carolina seceded from the Union, followed in January by the rest of the southern states. The north would call the coming war "The Great Rebellion," and over 600,000 Confederate and Union soldiers would perish during the next four years.

In Lower Windsor Township fathers and sons, brothers and cousins no doubt followed the crisis with mixed emotions. Both Simon and Georg Adam Fitzkee would recall the devastation caused by the Napoleonic wars, in which their uncle, and perhaps their father, fought and in which who knows how many family members, friends, and acquaintances lost their lives. Although the conventional wisdom on both sides of the line was that the rebellion would be over within a very few months, with victory predicted by both sides, the Fitzkee families must have been anxious, for the sons were of an age to go to war in 1861. Of Georg Adam Fitzkee's sons, John Wright was 24 years of age, possibly not yet married, but we do not know for sure. Margaret Leyburt, whom he would marry, was 15 in that year. We do know that their first son, Elmer, was born around 1862, when she would have been 16 or 17 years of age; John Wright's brother, Adam G, was 22 and would not marry until 1868; and Henry, at 16, was not quite ready for war but would be soon. He never would marry. Simon's sons were John S., age 26, married to Rebecca with a two-year-old son. A second would be born in 1863. Simon's second son, George Adam, was 23, and still single, since Henrietta, who is listed in the 1880 census as his wife, was only 11 in 1861. His third son, William, was 22 and married with one son; and his fourth son, Adam, was 20. At least four of them, and perhaps five, would fight in Union blue.

The news of the firing on Fort Sumter, which occurred on the 12th of April 1861, followed by the proclamation of President Lincoln on the 15th calling for 75,000 troops, aroused the patriotism of the people of York county. The Union feeling was intensely strong. Flags were suspended from the principal buildings and private residences, and poles were erected from which the stars-and-stripes floated proudly in the breeze. Baltimore, Washington D.C. Harrisburg and Philadelphia were all centers of mobilization, and regiments of Pennsylvania volunteers were gathered from towns throughout the state, most registered for three-months duty. A training camp outside the town of York was established and soon held well over 5,000 troops. As early as the 21st of April, a group of volunteers from the county, known as the York Rifles, was attached to the Pennsylvania Second Regiment.

Most regiments were ordered to Chambersburg and left on the 1st of June with every demonstration of encouragement, amid cheers and the waving of handkerchiefs. The 16th regiment followed a week later. That morning a flag was presented to the regiment by the ladies of York. A veritable storm of flowers fell upon the soldiers as they marched through the streets; each one sported a bouquet of spring flowers in the barrel of his musket. Such was the popular appeal of a war that would soon bring horror and sorrow to so many of those caught up in the festivities of "Johnny gone for a-soldiering." By the fortunes of war, most of the York County soldiers would return at the end of their 90-day term without having seen battle. However, within a few months many of these young soldiers would be back in uniform having signed for year-long terms.



By the summer of 1862, the concept of a 90-day war was long forgotten, and the Union was calling for three-year enlistments whenever possible, although one-year enlistments were more the rule. In August, a company was raised in York that would join with companies from nearby Hanover as well as Cumberland County and a few other counties to form the 113th Regiment. On the 11th of that month, 1862, a similar regiment was formed and both Adam Fitzkee and his cousin, Adam G. Fitzkee, enlisted as privates in Company B.

The southern victories of that spring and summer had brought General Lee and his army to a point where one more major victory would likely force Europe to recognize the Confederacy, which could well alter the outcome of the war. In September, Lee led 40,000 soldiers into Maryland with a goal of taking the Federal rail center at Harrisburg. The Union forces fell into possession of a copy of Lee's orders and moved to head them off at Sharpsburg, Maryland. Among those forces was the 130th Pennsylvania, which proceeded at once to Washington and was then moved across the Potomac where it was assigned to French's division of Sumner's corps. On the 15th Lee's 18,000 Confederates took up positions along the crest of a three-mile ridge just east of the town of Sharpsburg with the Potomac at their back. In front ran a little creek called Antietam, which would give the ensuing battle its name. McClellan and his army of 95,000 soon began arriving across the creek. McClellan, who had a reputation for reticence, missed an opportunity to strike immediately and crush Lee's army and perhaps end the war. While he worried with his battle plan Stonewall Jackson's corps rejoined Lee and doubled his force.

Union supplies and artillary cross Antietam Creek in support of Sumner's troops near what would become known as the Bloody Lane.

On September 17, 1862, but one month after enlisting, the two Adam Fitzkees found themselves and the 130th dead center in front of the enemy at Sharpsburg, posted upon the crest of a hill. Across the creek was a field of corn and behind it the enemy lying behind a stone wall in one direction at the further edge, and in rifle pits 100 yards in another direction. The regiment held this exposed position for hours.

It was reported that when the cannon from both sides opened up, every stalk of corn in that field was cut as closely as could have been done with a knife, and the slain lay in rows precisely as they had stood in their ranks a few moments before. The sound of musketry and cannon was deafening, and shot and shell rained down in torrents. The new regiments (including the 130th), untested in battle, were praised for bravery, "never seen in any army." Their officers declared they deserved a place of prominence in the history

This monument commemorates the 130th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry's participation in the bloodiest day of the Civil War, September 17, 1862, at Sharpsburg, Maryland, also known as Antietam.

of the battle.

Sumner's troops struck D.H. Hill's Confederate division at mid-morning. One division, led by Sumner himself, entered the fight at the Dunker Church, while the other two attacked D.H. Hill's division, which was defending a sunken road that ever after would be known as the "Bloody Lane." Bodies piled two and three deep soon littered every foot of it. Suffering heavy losses, the Union forces finally secured their lines and drove out the Confederates.

The battle lasted one day and was a tactical draw. On the 18th both armies, exhausted, remained in place. Once again McClellan, out of his own inability to act decisively, missed an opportunity to defeat Lee, and that night Lee withdrew his army across the Potomac. The combined casualties totaled nearly 23,000. It was the single bloodiest day of the war. On that one day the Union army lost 2,100 dead and over 10,000 wounded, double those of D-Day eighty-two years later. The south lost 10,318 – a quarter of its army. What horrors those Fitzkee boys must have seen!

The advance of Lee's army in September 1862 was made possible in part by the withdrawal from eastern Pennsylvania of Federal forces under General Pope. This raised great apprehensions in York and surrounding counties as a large force of Rebels moved through the area. As a result, they formed companies of volunteers to protect the populace. They were all mustered into the service in mid- September and were discharged about two weeks later, when the news of the battle of Antietam and the retreat of Lee across the Potomac quieted the country. Records show that John S. Fitzkee, Simon's son, was a member of the 5th Pennsylvania Regiment, company K, during this time, enlisting September 11 and mustering out just 16 days later at Harrisburg.

On November 8, 1862, Adam G. Fitzkee was invalided out of the 130th and returned to York County. His cousin, Adam, remained with the regiment and saw action at Chancellorsville, May 2 through 5, 1863, under General Hooker. That, too, was a horrendous battle, with the Federals suffering almost 17,000 casualties and the Confederates 13,000. Adam, remained in the 130th until he mustered out 21 May, 1863, when the 130th was relieved from further duty.

On the announcement that May of the return of the York County veterans a town meeting was held for their reception, and on Saturday, 23 May 1863, they received a handsome and hearty welcome. The bells were rung, business suspended, and a procession formed under military and civic escort to the United States Hospital, where a feast was served by the Ladies' Aid Society and speeches of welcome were made and responded to by the Colonel in praise of the bravery of his men in their battles. The county seat of York is only a few miles from Lower Windsor Township, so it is likely that the whole Fitzkee clan turned out to welcome Adam home.

Another crisis faced the citizens of York County in June of 1863, heralded by families, and horses and cattle fleeing ahead of Confederate troops on the march. Although several emergency companies were formed, with which the Fitzkee men were likely involved, the enemy moved so quickly that there was no possibility of resistance, and any such action once the Confederates were there would likely result in disaster to the town. Refugees were moved toward Wrightsville.

On 28 June, a rebel brigade of 2,500 men marched into York followed by two regiments of infantry with ten pieces of artillery. In the strange chivalry of the times, the men

Union infantry take a break from the action.

were restrained from violence and the citizens were treated with respect. One wonders about the thoughts and feelings of those veterans of the 130th who had recently mustered out, Union soldiers who had lost friends and family at Antietam, Chancellorsville, and in other battles. Were they moved to anger? Were they physically and emotionally exhausted? Were they tempted to take up arms? Many citizens had lost family and friends in those battles, as well. Their emotions must have been raw, indeed. In any case, the iron hand of the enemy was quickly applied as Major-General Early, commander of the division, requisitioned provisions and articles of clothing including 32,000 pounds of fresh beef, 3,500 pounds of sugar, 2,000 pairs of shoes or boots and $100,000 in money. In all, four brigades were in York and vicinity, one of which marched to Wrightsville in pursuit of the few Union troops that had recently evacuated York. The Union soldiers retreated across the bridge at Wrightsville after the exchange of a few shots with the enemy and then burned the bridge. A monument exists today marking the point "furthest east" reached by confederate troops during the Rebellion.

Those Confederate troops moved on to Gettysburg to join with Lee against Meade's Northern army in perhaps the defining conflict of the entire War of Rebellion. If Antietam had been the bloodiest day, this was the bloodiest battle, with almost a third of those engaged lost. The north suffered 23,000 casualties; the South, 28,000. Adam Fitzky came within six weeks of being a part of that horror.

After the Union success and Lee's retreat, the citizens of York sent supplies and assistance to the wounded and suffering soldiers on and in the neighborhood of the field of battle. In less than three hours thirty wagons, loaded down with the necessaries of life, bread, cakes, hams and delicacies, and accompanied by male and female nurses, were on their way to the battlefield. Provisions continued to arrive and were at once forwarded to the scene of action. Such was the wealth and compassion of York County.

In the early part of 1864, a series of events was sponsored in York County to raise funds for the war effort. Then, on February 29, 1864, Georg Adam's youngest son, Henry, age 18, enlisted in the 45th Regiment of the Pennsylvania Infantry, Company K.

A few weeks later a Union chaplain noted on the morning of May 4 that the entire Grand Army of the Potomac under Grant's leadership was in motion. The day was clear, warm and beautiful. In the countless encampments, bands were playing lively airs, and banners were waving as regiments, brigades, and divisions fell into line. It was a scene of unusual grandeur.

Sixty thousand of Lee's troops were waiting for them in an area known as The Wilderness, a tangled thicket of cedar and pine where Lee had trapped Hooker's Union army a year earlier. The fighting in The Wilderness was intense, with the Federals losing 17,000 men in two days, May 4 and 5, to half that of the enemy. Grant simply refused to accept defeat, however, and moved his army to the southeast where fighting continued at the town of Spotsylvania. There followed 30 days of hard fighting at places like Cold Harbor and Petersburg. At the same time Sherman's army moved south from Chattanooga into Georgia and toward the sea.

The 45th came off 30 days furlough in mid-March, 1864, to find their thinned ranks bolstered to the full quota of 1,000 men by recruits from York and Lancaster Counties,

This is the difficult terrain known as The Wilderness, where Henry Fitzkee was wounded.

among them Henry Fitzkee. The 45th was a seasoned brigade known as the Veteran Volunteer Infantry, having been first organized in 1862. Many in their ranks had re-enlisted more than once. In late April, the entire corps was reviewed by Generals Grant and Burnside and later participated in a marching salute to President Lincoln and General Burnside in Washington before Long Bridge into Virginia. Grim resolve and cheerful devotion were the lessons of the hour, as many a brave man felt he was crossing Long Bridge never to return.

Within a very few days Company K, deployed as skirmishers, was moving cautiously through pines and underbrush toward the enemy at Wilderness Tavern. In the history of the 45th Pennsylvania, Ephraim E. Myers, a member of Company K, reports: "The company moved to the left a short distance and then forward, but three of us remained at our first position a short time and then moved forward. The Johnnies were not slow to return our fire. They seemed to be moving from tree to tree toward us.... The musketry firing was so intensely fierce that I said to my comrades, 'My, oh my! I don't see how in such fighting anyone can be saved.'

"I shall never forget the splendid bravery of Captain Campbell. As he fell with a mortal wound on his body he beckoned us to come on.... I noticed close by me one of Company A's boys on his haunches behind a tree firing. I was looking at him as he was reloading; I saw him fall, shot through the head.... The next morning some of the company went out and found Private George W. Gilbert of East Prospect behind a log. As they carried him mortally wounded past me he said... 'I am going to die.' A brave soldier was he.

"[We] dug a long ditch in the woods about three feet deep and wide as the length of a man. After wrapping our dead in blankets, they were tenderly laid side by side without any ceremony and then they were covered over. Every one of the graves was marked with a cracker box lid for a head board, on which was penciled the name, company and regiment."

The Union suffered nearly 18,000 casualties during those three days in early May. Among those wounded on the 6th or 7th was Private Henry Fitzkee.

The 45th fought on until the end of the war. We do not know how badly injured Henry was, or whether or not he was able to return to duty. He mustered out June 20, 1865, and applied for a Civil War pension on August 28 of that year as an invalid. He died on May 28, 1866. Because of his invalid status, our assumption is that he likely died of complications caused by war wounds or war-related illness. It is interesting to note that his father, Georg Adam Fitzkee, applied for a parent's pension in Henry's name in what appears to be 1880. Georg Adam would have been 71 years of age at that time and no doubt applied on the grounds that if his son were alive he could have helped provide for his care.

Lee and Grant faced one another in the Wilderness region, more particularly in front of Petersburg, from the commencement of fighting in the Wilderness in early May 1864, to late March 1865. The line of conflict stretched over 50 miles; and, while Grant's forces had grown to 125,000, Lee's had dwindled to 35,000. By this time an important part of the Union war effort was guarding railroad lines, bridges, and supply lines in general from marauding Confederate cavalry. The 195th Pennsylvania Regiment was re-organized at Camp Curtin near Harrisburg, in February 1865, with one-year enlistments. Among the enlistees were Georg Adam's oldest son, John Wright Fitzkee, who entered as a private; his brother Adam G. Fitzkee, who had apparently recovered from his wounds and reenlisted as a private; and his cousin Adam Fitzkee, who reenlisted as a corporal. Their duties included guarding the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, with headquarters at North Mountain, West Virginia until March 16, when they were ordered to Charlestown, West Virginia and attached to the 2nd Brigade, 3rd Division, West Virginia until July, 1865. By that time, Grant and Lee had signed a peace agreement at the Appomattox Court House. The 195th finished their duties in what might be considered light duty until ordered to Washington D.C. where, on January 31, 1866, the three Fitzkee men and the rest of the 195th were mustered out. The war was over. Their duty was done.

For four of the cousins the end of the great War of Rebellion marked a return to life in York County and specifically Lower Windsor Township and the lives they and their families had established on land that had been relatively untouched by the war. John S. Fitzkee and his wife, Rebecca, remained in lower Windsor Township where he worked as a laborer. They had a large family of nine children, and he was still living there at age 84, as noted on the 1920 census, with a second wife, Elenora. His younger brother, Adam, who seems to have seen the most action in the Civil War, married Henrietta Flory on 15 February 1866. They raised a small family in Lower Windsor and Wrightsville, where he worked as a farmer and laborer most of his life. He died in 1901, at which time his wife, Henrietta, applied for a Civil War pension. John's and Adam's brother, George Adam, who apparently did not fight in the war, married Henrietta Mick on 25 December, 1867. He and his family were living in Wrightsville in 1880, where he worked as a laborer. In 1900 we find him, at age 61, living with his daughter Annie and her husband, William Flory, in Wightsville. He died in 1908. Their other brother, William, who also did not see service, was living in Spring Garden, York County, in 1870 and 1880, with his wife Melinda and their children. He was a successful farmer and his land was valued at $10,000. In 1900, he and his wife and several children were still living in York County, although he was listed in the census as a carpenter.

John Wright's brother Adam G. Fitzkee married Mary Elizabeth Ferry, 10 December 1868. The records show that they had twelve children. We find Adam and his family listed in the 1870 census for Lower Windsor where he was employed as a cigar maker – the tobacco industry was very prosperous in York County. His father, Georg Adam, age 63, was living with him at that time. He was still in Lower Windsor in 1880, still employed as a cigar maker. In 1900 he and his family were in North York, where Adam was still making cigars. In 1910, still in North York, we find him employed as a laborer in the local cemetery, at age 69. His wife died in 1914 and was buried at Prospect Hill, York County; Adam died in The Soldier's Home in Erie, Pennsylvania, in 1918.

While Georg Adam Fitzkee was living with his son Adam G. in 1870, in 1880 he was living with his cousin Peter Wilhelm Fitzkee. Peter, born in 1826, emigrated to Pennsylvania from Baden, Germany, with his wife, Clara Rosanna (or Rosina), around 1850. We find him first listed in the church records in 1851, and know that he filed his intent for naturalization on December 6, 1852, and was naturalized on 25, August 1856. He worked as a carpenter and as a farmer. The 1880 census shows Georg Adam, age 71, living with Peter and his family. We do not know if that was a permanent arrangement or if Georg Adam was living with one and then another of his relatives. It appears as though the relationship among the cousins was a close one, for we find both the name Adam and Simon among Peter's children.

In *The York Democratic Daily Age*, York, Pennsylvania, Tuesday afternoon, March 17, 1885, we find this poignant account: "Mr. Adam Fitzkee, a German, who has been missing from his home near East Prospect since January 11th, was found drowned last Sunday in the Susquehanna, near the shore, with his face down and his feet frozen to the ice. Justice Wallace was notified and held an inquest, the jury rendering a verdict of death by drowning. The deceased was about 65 years of age [actually about 75 years of age] and lived with his son. It is stated that his mind was deranged for some time previous. His remains were interred in East Prospect cemetery."

There are some 90 Fitzkees listed in the 1900 census in York and surrounding counties in Pennsylvania, as well as another dozen or so living outside of the state. Almost all of them are the progeny of Johann Adam Fitzkee and his sons who immigrated in 1832 and his brother's son Peter Wilhelm Fitzkee, who immigrated in 1850. They were at least successful in longevity and in having large families! It will be left to further genealogy studies to reveal which of them made their marks on their communities. One of them did, for sure. In the history of York County published in 1886, we find these comments: "The interest in public education in this township is manifest from the comfortable appearance of the schoolhouses. They are nearly all built of a fine quality of stone, which is quarried in the township. They are fourteen in number." One of these is the Fitzkee School. There is also a Fitzkee Lane in York township.

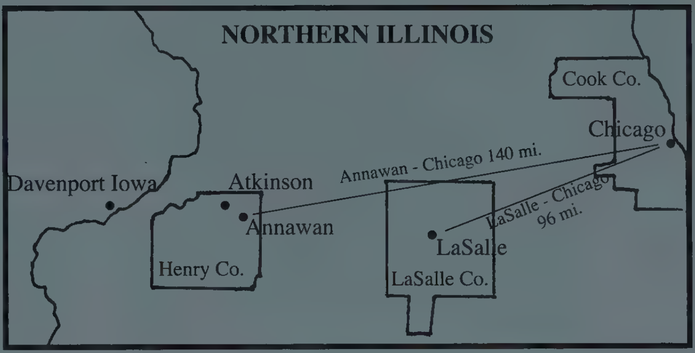
By the time John Wright Fitzkee returned from his service in the army, he and his wife, Margaret Leyburt, had two children, Elmer and George, born in 1862 and 1864. Sarah would be born in 1867. Their fourth child, Howard Daniel Fitzkee would be born in 1869, in the town of Annawan, Henry County, Illinois. Sometime between 1867 and 1869 John Wright Fitzkee and his family decided to move to Annawan, Illinois. Was it a spirit of adventure, perhaps born of service in the war? Had he met someone in the army from Illinois who convinced him that in the West land was cheap and opportunities ample? John Wright had been apprenticed as a carpenter. He had learned his trade well. He had marketable skills. What was there for him in York County? Family, to be sure; but the long history of the Fitzkee family was full of episodes of men and women who wanted more for themselves and their families. His grandfather, father, and uncle had provided him the example. John Wright and his family headed west.

ADAM
FITZKEE
Born
Died

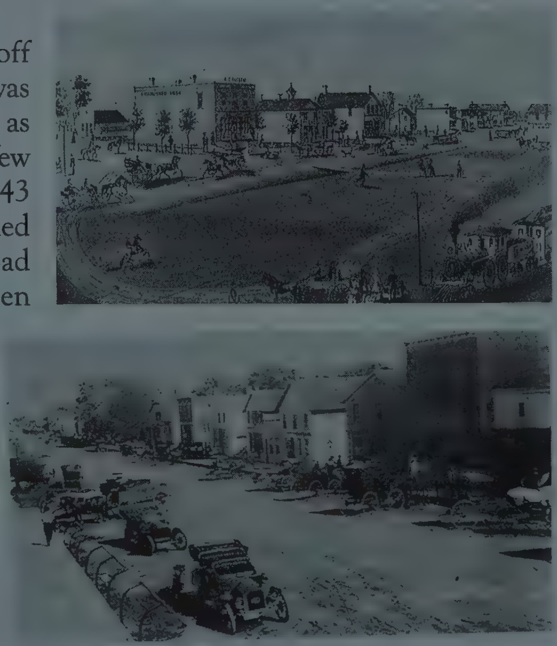
Adam Fitzkee's grave in the East Prospect Cemetery, York County, Pennsylvania. Adam was Dariel Fitzkee's great grandfather.

Chapter 4.

Illinois – Land of Opportunity



John Wright Fitzkee, Margaret and their three children, one in arms, stepped off the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad at the small town of Annawan, Illinois, sometime between 1867 and 1869. It was a thriving little town, typical of the Midwest after the Civil War. A Currier & Ives type of postcard shows a broad main street with well constructed shops and homes and a buggy drawn by a prancing horse. The reality of the town was not far off that picture. The northern part of Henry County was very near the center of what would become known as The Corn Belt. Atkinson, Annawan's sister city a few miles to the northwest, had been established in 1843 by Charles Atkinson, an eastern capitalist who settled in the area and used his influence to get the railroad to run through his land holdings. It had since been settled by Belgians and Germans, as well as settlers from the eastern states. Whistle stops were established first at Atkinson and then at Annawan after Charles Atkinson helped that town get its start by laying out a square mile for the town just south of the railroad. The whole of Henry County was laid out in townships in 1857, and both Atkinson and Annawan became bustling grain depots as corn raised on the nearby farms was sent to market. Originally, the land in that area was a combination of marsh and gentle hills, prone to flooding in the wet season and unhealthy in the hot, damp summers. In the fall peaceful tribes of Winnebago Indians from Wisconsin settled into winter quarters between the two towns – Annawan is named for one of their chiefs. Charles Atkinson and others recognized the value of the fertile land and at considerable expense straightened the meandering Green River, thereby draining the swamplands and converting them to some of the most fertile farmland in the county.


Downtown Annawan, in 1875 and 1908.

But John Wright Fitzkee was a carpenter, not a farmer, and by 1870 he and his family were living in Atkinson, the larger of the two towns. John Wright's handiwork

graced many of the town structures, and the 1880 census finds him boarding in Cambridge, Illinois, doing the interior woodwork on the Henry County courthouse – a historic landmark in the county to this day. In Henry Kiner's remarkable *History of Henry County, Illinois*, he wrote about the Ed Everett's store, probably built in the late 1870s: "The woodwork in this store is a marvel of ingenuity. It was put together with matchless grace, and finished with consummate art. The man who did it was John Fitzkee, a resident of Atkinson. The man also did the fine work in wood in the interior of the Henry County courthouse. John Fitzkee is a genius. He does not look the part, being a diamond in the rough to gaze upon; but he certainly could work wonders in wood." That old store still stands in downtown Atkinson, and local historian Bill Freddy remarked on the excellent wood staircase that led upstairs where dances were held in the old days. It is probable that John Wright Fitzkee used his genius on several of the other buildings from that era that still stand, such as the township hall, built in 1894, where Bill Freddy maintains his Atkinson Historical Society Museum, a hidden gem of Americana. Kiner remarked that John Fitzkee and his contemporary Philip Wintz were the two best "wood butchers" in the county.

John Wright Fitzkee, Dariel's grandfather, was considered one of the finest "wood butchers" in Henry County. He was known for his fine staircase in the old store, upper right, and especially for his work on the interior of the historic Henry County Courthouse in Cambridge, right. He likely worked on the Atkinson Town Hall, upper left, which now houses the Atkinson Historical Society. Far right is a photo of John Wright Fitzkee's gravestone in Grandview Cemetery near Atkinson.

John and Margaret raised their family in Atkinson. Elmer, George, and Sarah had been born in Pennsylvania. Howard Daniel was born in Annawan in 1869, and John W. and Archie in Atkinson, in 1872 and 1874 respectively. The couple lived out their lives in that town. In 1904, at the age of 65, John Wright applied for and was granted a Civil War pension, as many war veterans did as they grew old and ailments exacerbated by wartime experiences made it difficult for them to earn a living. He died August 14, 1922, at the age of 83. His wife received a widow's pension until her death, July 10, 1926. They are buried in Grandview Cemetery, just south of Atkinson.

Sara Fitzkee remained in Atkinson and married Elijah Chapler. John Wright Fitzkee, Jr. and Archie Fitzkee lived in Atkinson most of their lives. John Wright Jr. was a carpenter and laborer and Archie ran a pool hall for some time and also worked as a laborer. Both served in the Spanish American War. John Wright Jr. received an invalid's pension beginning in February, 1899. We suspect this was a result of disease rather than a battle wound. He was married and divorced and lived with his parents until their deaths. We find no record of his having any children. The last we read of him is in the 1930 census, where at age 58 he is listed as a roomer in a residential hotel. Archie and his wife, Ada, had several children. Archie played on the town baseball team, the Atkinson Nine, which was quite an achievement in those days. He and his wife divorced sometime before 1920. He lived in Minnesota for a period of time and we read of him in the 1930 census in Sycamore, Illinois, where he worked as a laborer and lived in a rooming house.

Dariel's father, Howard, became a master builder himself, constructing the Annawan Township Hall (above) which today is the Township Library and the Catholic Church in Annawan, which has since been replaced.

Elmer, George and Howard returned to Annawan to live. It is likely that they courted Annawan girls, married, and lived near their in-laws. Elmer began as a clerk in a drugstore and eventually owned his own hardware store. He was very successful and was Mayor of Annawan for at least 14 years, beginning in 1896. The records we have access to end in 1910, so he might have continued in that position for some time after that. He and his wife, Ada, did have children: DeWitt, born in 1898, and Henry, born in 1901. The 1910 census shows a servant girl, Bertha Wilroy, living with them. George and his wife, Lizzie, lived in Annawan all their lives, but had no children. George was a carpenter and laborer. Elmer and Ada moved to Calumet, Indiana, sometime in the 1920s where Elmer worked for a steel company. Henry lived with them and was a civil engineer for the city.

Howard D. Fitzkee was perhaps most like his father. He became a skilled carpenter and is mentioned in the *History of Henry County* in that regard. "Howard Fitzkee built the fine Catholic church [in Annawan]," wrote Henry Kiner, "and is now building the elegant township hall." It *was* an elegant building by 1909 standards, the most elegant building in Annawan. It stands today as the public library.

Howard and Francelia Cora Comp of Annawan eloped to Davenport, Iowa, on June 17, 1896. Her age was listed as 18; however, she was born in 1879 or 1880, so she was probably 16 and could have been as young as 15. Howard was 27 at the time. Perhaps Cora, as she was known, was too young to marry in Illinois and perhaps there was no age limit in Iowa. Cora was the daughter of Hiram Eschelman Comp, a farmer and blacksmith who would later become an automobile salesman, and Amelia Linehan. Records show that Hiram married Margaret Guthrie sometime after 1880, so it is possible that Cora's mother died in childbirth or shortly thereafter. For many years, Howard's family lived next door to his in-laws, on section 137-1/2. Addresses in Annawan Village were by sections, rather than by street names. The house is no longer standing, but many of the homes from that era are.

Both Howard and his brother, Elmer, became successful and prominent members of the Annawan community. As mentioned, Elmer become the owner of a hardware store specializing in large appliances such as stoves, and Howard became a successful builder and was the treasurer of the town volunteer fire department. The 1900 census shows that both families had a female servant living with them. Howard and Cora's first child, Dariel (pronounced Dar-ee-al, not Darrel), was born 13 May 1898. Dariel's brother Mino Ardath was born 21 February 1900. A third son, Richard Linehan was born 17 April 1908, Amelia Margarita was born 15 May 1913, Coralyn 26 November 1916, and Patricia Marie was born on 28 January 1919.

Eighteen ninety-eight was a remarkable time to be born. The "gay nineties" were drawing to a close. That term first became popular during The Great Depression as many people looked back on their childhood and remembered the 1890s as a much happier time. In fact, it was a happy time for most people, but not for everyone. Fifty percent of people in the larger cities were very poor and lived in overcrowded apartment buildings that barely met the lowest standards of cleanliness and safety. Most of them lacked bathtubs, toilets, and even running water. For factory workers, including children as young as ten or twelve years of age, who barely earned a living wage and who lived in those overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, and for many minorities including most African Americans, the "gay nineties" was certainly a misnomer.

The nation as a whole was relatively prosperous, and many people had both discretionary income and time, even if only enough to go to a movie house, to enjoy a new-fangled candy bar, to watch a baseball game played between two rival towns, or to go for a ride on the new safety bicycles that had air-filled tires. By 1900, there were some ten million bicycles in use in the United States. The World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago showed people just what wonders the future might hold. Even if they could not attend and ride it themselves, people everywhere were awed by the idea of the 250-foot tall Ferris Wheel. Vaudeville was a popular pastime in New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco, and similar cities, while the Lyceum and Chautauqua circuits brought popular culture – music, educational, and inspirational talks and novelty acts to farming communities throughout the nation.

In January of 1898, the battleship *USS Maine* was sent to Havana Harbor to protect U.S. citizens and property from anti-Spanish rioting. Cubans had been fighting for independence from Spain for several years and U.S. newspapers were filled with Spanish atrocities, real and imagined. On February 15, the *Maine* exploded, killing 260 crew members. The assumption was that it had been struck by an underwater Spanish mine, although nearly a hundred years later it would be determined that the explosion was an accident. Public opinion, fueled by the yellow press in the form of William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*, demanded an invasion. Spain, responding to the American press and more particularly to congressional action, declared war on April 24, which was reciprocated the next day by the United States. Two days later, Howard's brother John W. Fitzkee, joined the 6th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, Company B, as a wagoner. Two weeks later, his younger brother, Archie, became a private in the same company. And, two days after that Dariel C. Fitzkee was born to Howard and Francelia Fitzkee, in Annawan, Illinois.

Within a week the 6th Illinois was sent to Camp Alger in Virginia, then to South Carolina and finally ordered to Cuba, embarking July 8 for Cuba. The war was completely one-sided; and, by the time the 6th Illinois arrived, Teddy Roosevelt and his Rough Riders had made their famous charge up San Juan Hill. The fighting in Cuba was over, and the troops were re-directed to Puerto Rico. After very little fighting, an armistice was reached between Spain and the U.S. in mid August, and the regiment was back in Illinois by September 16. John W. and Archie were back home within days. The regiment lost no one to battle deaths, but 24 of them died from disease, probably malaria, which was rampant in Cuba and Puerto Rico. (The U.S. lost a total of 365 to battle deaths compared to 2,061 to disease during the short war.) We see that John W. was awarded a disability pension, which could well have been a result of that disease.

Dariel at five months. Dariel's mother Cora and Dariel at about age two or three. Dariel at age eight.

The importance of the Spanish-American War cannot be underestimated. The U.S. took possession of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines and within two years annexed the Hawaiian Islands and half of the Samoan Islands. As Dariel Fitzkee's second birthday approached, the United States was recognized as a world colonial and military power. The western frontier of the nation had been settled and the growing railroad system was both expanding the country's horizons and bringing the American people closer together.

The first decade of the 20th century, a decade that would define Dariel Fitzkee, has been called the Age of Innocence, the Age of Optimism, and the Age of Confidence. As we have seen, Dariel was born into a family with a strong heritage of hard work and a desire to improve life for oneself and for one's family. His grandfather and two of his uncles were war veterans, and in an era when patriotism was so strong that every town enjoyed a 4th of July parade with flags and banners flying from every house and store, children grew up sharing that sense of pride in country. America expected peace, prosperity, and progress, and that is what many of them enjoyed. *The History of Henry County* points out that those early farmers combined hard work with the new scientific farming methods, and many of them became wealthy.

Annawan, Illinois, was in the heartland of America, the great Midwest to which so many had migrated from the East after the Civil War. Annawan itself had a population of only 423 in 1898, but that did not include the farm population scattered throughout the surrounding countryside. Scores more would come in to Annawan to bring children to school, to attend church, and to enjoy social occasions. The town was laid out in a square mile marked out of the rolling prairie. A wide, main street with stores, a tavern, the town hall, and some residences ran parallel to and just south of the railroad tracks. In 1904, the town council spent $18.78 to purchase a hundred hard maple trees to plant throughout the town. Many of those trees are still standing today and give the town a "hometown U.S.A." charm. Young Dariel enjoyed the pleasures of the small town. While he no doubt had chores to do, his family lived in town so his life was less rigorous than those of his friends who grew up on neighboring farms. His cousin DeWitt was born in 1898 as well, and his brother, Mino Ardath, known as "Pike," in 1900 and another cousin, Henry, in 1901. A third brother, Richard, or "Dick," was born in 1908, when Dariel was ten. We know that the families were close and the boys were steadfast playmates at school and at home. Dariel's father, in addition to being the most successful carpenter in town, was also treasurer of the town's volunteer fire department – no doubt a source of pride for the boy.

Dariel, center. Pike to his right and their cousins. Hiram Comp, Cora's father, was a car salesman. He is at the wheel in this 1908 photo. Howard, Dariel's father is standing and Dariel is at the far right with his head just above the steering wheel. Pike and little brother Richard are the two children in the car with Cora and Cora's stepmother. The bottom photo is of the Annawan School boy's baseball team. We believe Dariel is at the bottom, second from the right.

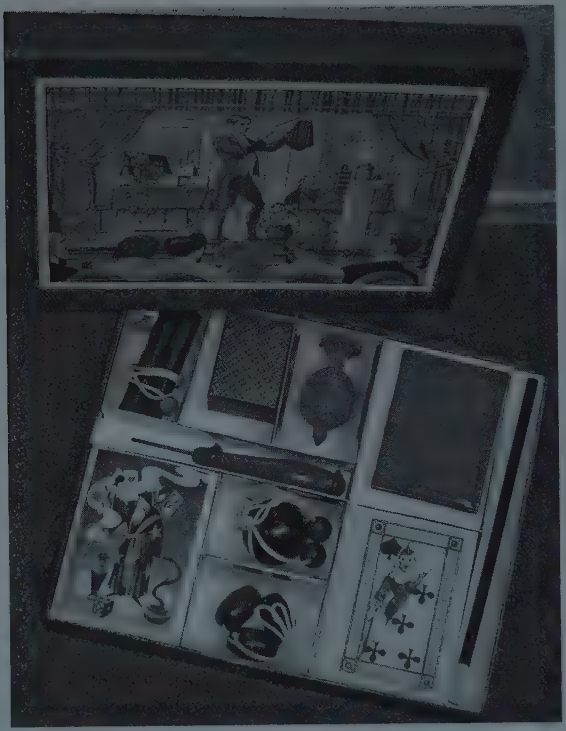
Town life in those days before radio, let alone television, provided a variety of entertainment for the citizens, from church socials to "hoe-down" dances and music recitals. School was held in a two-story wood-frame building built in 1870 and was, no doubt, the center of much activity. Dariel's mother was musically inclined; and, since she was the organist for church and established the first town choir, she probably had a piano in the home. Sales of sheet music, which could be mail-ordered, soared during the 1900s, with nearly 100 songs selling more than a million copies. The top seller, "In the Shade of

the Old Apple Tree," sold eight million copies. An ability to play and a supply of sheet music were all that was needed to provide an evening of entertainment. Dariel's mother insisted that he take music lessons and, as we shall see, he became quite proficient on the violin.

Amateur dramatic productions were very popular, as well, and we have a delightful photograph of the cast members of the school play in 1913 that starred both students and faculty. Dariel and his cousin DeWitt are at the extreme right in the front row, in black face. This is the first occasion we know of where Dariel participated in a theatrical production, but we will find that it remained a passion of his throughout much of his life. A second school photo, probably taken around 1913, shows several of the older Annawan students. It was only in 1912, when Dariel was 14, that the town council decided to organize a high school in Annawan. The only option until that time was in Atkinson, several miles away. Baseball was already the national pastime, and every boy hoped to play for the town nine. Dariel no doubt relished the fact that his father's cousin, Archie Fitzkee, the "war hero," was a member of the Atkinson starting nine, a perennial powerhouse which had actually had one of its players play professional baseball in the east. We did find a photograph from those early years in Annawan taken of the boy's baseball team. While no names were listed, we are confident that second from the right in the front row.

Dariel, seated, second from right, and his cousin DeWitt, seated right, performed in black face in the town play in 1913. The next photo shows a typical street in Annawan with period houses.

Marcia Fitzroy Dobbs, Dariel's daughter, remembers stories her father told about his childhood. Those were days when entertainment depended on the ingenuity of youth. They were days of marbles, tops and mumble-de-peg, or running through dusty roads pushing a barrel hoop with a stick. Dariel and Pike were often given the responsibility of caring for their younger brother, Dick, so their mother could get her chores done. Dick was ten years younger than Dariel, so that would have been an unwanted responsibility. There were times when "taking care of Dick" meant taking him around the corner of the house, out of sight of their mother, and tying him to a tree so the older boys could play at what they wanted. Dariel had wonderful ideas that he put into action. One of the most spectacular was "the loop the loop" using ladders and a barrel. Dariel and Pike got up on the barn roof and nailed ladders in place in such a way that a barrel would roll down one ladder and have enough momentum to roll up another ladder and launch into space and then back down to a crash landing. But it was not Dariel who was the test pilot. Oh, no. He easily convinced the impressionable Pike of the glory of being the first to ride the rails. Pike climbed inside the barrel and Dariel turned him loose at the top of the ladder track. Down the ladder bumped the barrel, then along the second ladder fastened to the first, then into the air. This wasn't likely very high off the ground, but it must have been a thrill for Pike – until he landed! Dariel was afraid to look. He was afraid that Pike had perished for sure. We can imagine Pike lying there amidst the broken barrel staves and



Shown here is a replica of what we believe was the magic kit that Dariel received for Christmas when a boy.

twisted hoops laughing as Dariel peeked between his fingers. As Dariel realized that his brother had survived we can hear him say, "Pike. That was great! Let's do it again!" As is so often the case, there is a slightly different version of this story from another family member – Dariel Norris, Dariel's namesake and granddaughter of his younger brother, Dick. In her version of the story, her grandfather, Dick, was in the barrel, at about three or four years of age. In any case, notice that there is *no version* with Dariel in the barrel!

Marcia's mother met a member of Dariel's family once and was told that a common sight was Cora Fitzkee rushing out of the house to grab Dariel and Pike, who were always into mischief, and knock their heads together. If one could ever read character into photographs, the snap shot of the five Fitzkee boys, brothers and cousins, show boys who would be willing and ready to try just about anything for fun!

Dariel's daughter Marcia tells us that one of Dariel's chores was squashing potato bugs – picking them off the plants by hand and whacking them between two boards. Dariel hated that job and ever after hated to have his hands dirty or sticky. "Daddy would sit in a lawn chair to socialize, but he never set foot in a yard or garden to work. Mother did all of that."

Sometime in his youth, Dariel became interested in magic. "To my mind," he wrote in a *Genii* magazine column in 1955, "magic and Christmas seem to go together. Probably this is because, as a child, I received my first box of tricks as a Christmas present – an Obedient Ball; a miniature cardboard card box with a flap; a set of the old changing cards, the kind with different faces on diagonally opposite corners; a mathematical trick with numbers printed on cards; and a Grandmother's Necklace. In a way it was probably the most valuable Christmas present I ever received for it opened up a whole new world of interest that has remained with me, presenting a fascinating variety of facets – friends, activities, hobby, contacts, fields of study, recreation, professional experience and a great many other things." He also remembered as a small boy seeing a play called "Ole Olson" – even the title smacks of rural Midwest immigrants. During the course of the play, a child is abducted and taken to a haunted cave. One whole act, played in this cave, is done in Black Art, a lighting technique that renders certain actions on stage unseen. "It still seems to me to be the best demonstration of this type of performance I have ever seen," he wrote many years later. In addition to these early experiences with magic, it is probable that around age twelve or thirteen Dariel witnessed a magician at one of the Chautauqua performances held in Henry County, possibly at the town of Kewanee, about ten miles south of Annawan. Kewanee was the largest town in Henry County and with a population of around ten thousand would have attracted Chautauqua circuits. Researching the Circuit Chautauqua to determine which magicians played in the area is beyond the scope of this study, but we do know that the suave, courteous Eugene Laurant and the down-to-earth Ed Reno were both booked by the Redpath-Chicago Chautauqua for a considerable period from 1912 on. We also know that Reno played the town of Princeton, a whistle stop a few miles east of Annawan; but Dariel could have seen either one and, of course, other magicians played the Chautauqua circuit as well.

Chautauqua began in the mid-1870s, actually as a summer camp by the shores of Lake Chautauqua, New York, to train Sunday School teachers. The concept became extremely popular; and soon other assemblies, as they were called, sprang up across the country attracting family audiences to "uplift and educate." Following the example of the Lyceum Circuits, whose programs played assembly halls throughout the country in the winter months, touring Chautauqua were established that moved from town to town from April to November. By 1920, Circuit Chautauqua performers and lecturers were performing for over 40 million people a year in over 10,000 communities in 45 states.

Sometime during the summer, a notice would have appeared in the Atkinson newspaper or the *Geneseo Republic* announcing that the Redpath Chautauqua (or one of several other circuits) would be playing nearby in two weeks. It is likely that Howard, Elmer, and their families would have planned an outing to attend, perhaps traveling by one of Hiram Comp's motorcars. It helped to have a car salesman in the family.

REDPATH CHAUTAUQUA SYSTEM

Chautauqua programs were the highlight of the summer. These photos show both the exterior and the interior of a typical Chautauqua tent. It is probable that Dariel saw his first professional magician at a Chautauqua performance.

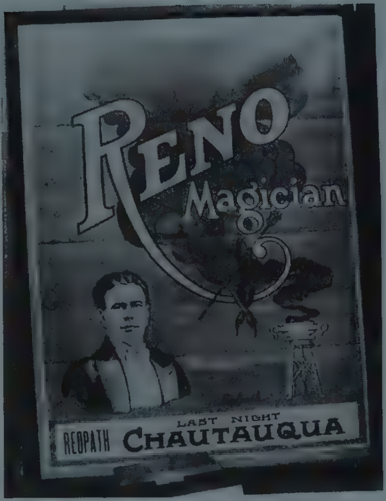
The Chautauqua tent would have been pitched in an open area near town, with signs and billboards pointing the way to the distinctive brown canvass tent. "Go To CHAUTAUQUA. Big Doings! 10¢." There, through the trees, could be seen the pennants waving in the breeze, if there was a breeze. It can be very hot and humid in Illinois in the summer. Fortunately the days were long and Chautauqua shows began in the early evening. If the weather warranted, the sides of the tent were rolled up to allow a cross breeze to help cool the audience, seated in their Sunday finery, paper fans aflutter. But it was important to be able to drop the sides of the tent and to protect the audience from sudden summer thunderstorms that were often accompanied by strong winds.

Inside, the tent was very spacious, 90 feet wide by 130 feet long, with excellent acoustics. The tents were made of twelve-ounce double-ply canvass, much heavier than the white tents used by circus shows or other "fly-by-night" road shows that didn't measure up to the moral standards of small communities. A thousand people could be easily accommodated in those Chautauqua tents, seated on folding wooden benches, or chairs, if they were lucky, set in long rows. Families would want to get there early so they weren't stuck trying to watch from behind one of the tent poles. At one end would be a large platform bedecked with at least one American flag.

For five nights in a row, the people would enjoy lectures on every topic from current events to social evils to comic storytelling. One night would be devoted to dramatic skits and eventually Shakespeare and modern plays. Musical shows included string quartets,

singing groups, brass bands, and bell ringers. Humorists were especially popular, poking fun at themselves and life in ways their audiences could understand and relate to. Audiences would be critical if the entertainment did not meet their expectations, and circuit managers understood that small-town America was church going and God fearing. Performance material was selected with care. And almost always there was a magician.

The personalities of Laurant and Reno were very different. Laurant had been performing his full-evening stage show for three decades and carried elaborate stage equipment and sometimes as many as five assistants. In *Culture Under Canvass*, Harry Harrison describes both Laurant's and Reno's shows: "Incredulous ears heard the battered old human skull that Laurant had just put down carefully on the table answer his questions smartly. Unbelieving eyes watched his phantom bride, one minute asleep on the couch, float away with the next breath into space, leaving only a glamorous veil as evidence that she ever had been there. Another of his acts, an impersonation not a trick, he called 'The Mystic Hat,' in which, by folding and refolding a felt hat brim with a hole in the center into a dozen shapes, he represented as many different characters. He was a made-to-order personality for show business."

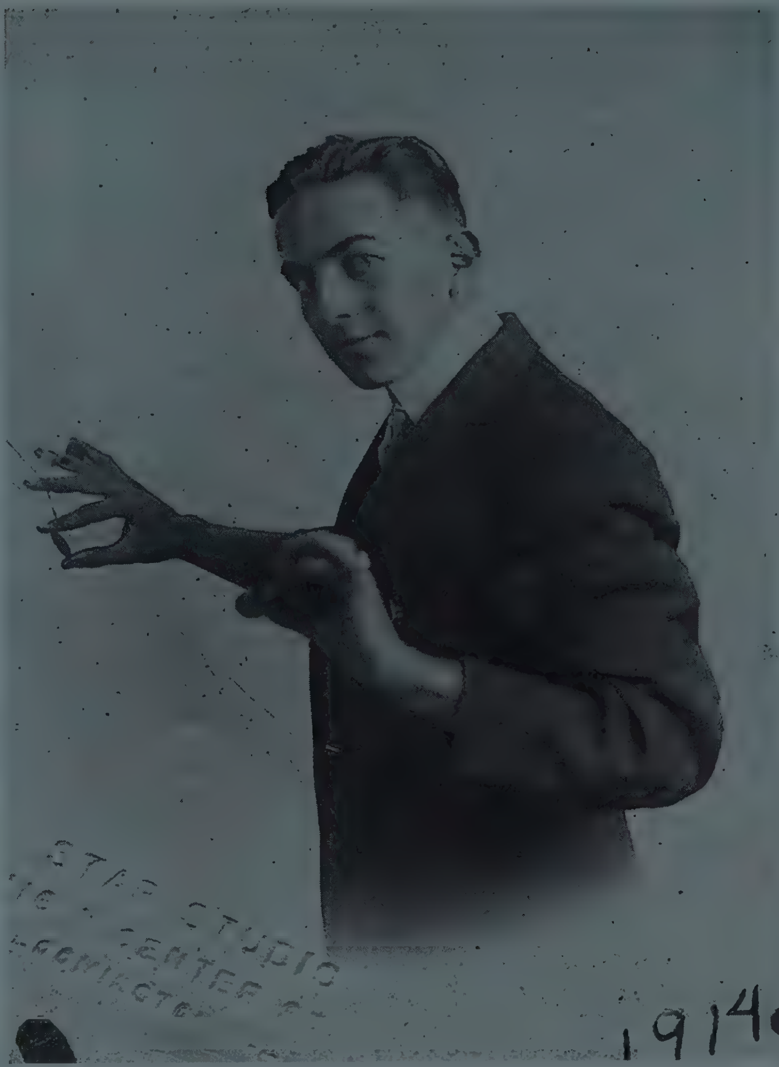


Two of the more popular magicians to play the Chautauqua circuit through Illinois while Dariel lived there were Eugene Laurant and Ed Reno. Dariel likely saw both of them.

By contrast, "Ed Reno carried very light paraphernalia. Friends among the talent used to say that all the equipment Reno actually needed was his fingertips." He was solid and down to earth, and "if the tents were not up when he arrived at the Chautauqua grounds, he seized a sledge and helped the crew boys. Reno carried a duck that waddled across the stage. 'Call him Mister,' he told the crowd, 'he's very sensitive.' The duck emerged, instead of a bunny, from Reno's hat. 'Mister' Duck could also jump from a stew pan filled with fire, and to put out the fire, Reno drew bowls of water from a handkerchief that he had just shaken out from his pocket.... After Reno left town, small boys tried for weeks to burn a feather in a piece of paper, rub the ashes and produce a dove. In Reno's clever hands, the white dove, having emerged from the ashes, had swelled immediately into two doves that sailed into the top of the tent and lighted on the cross poles."

Certainly hundreds, and probably thousands, of young boys like Dariel Fitzkee watched Laurant, Reno and other wonder workers and resolved to become the World's Greatest Magician. Most would be on to some other adventure within a week or two. Not Dariel Fitzkee. He took magic seriously, and, throughout his life, anything he took seriously he excelled at. He became a magician.

Sleight-of-hand magic is demanding. It requires dexterity, which can be mastered with practice, but it also requires personality to present it successfully; and this is usually best when it comes naturally. Dariel was well liked; he was a natural leader; and he commanded attention at whatever endeavor he chose to pursue. The two photographs we have of Dariel Fitzkee the teenage magician reflect this. The 1914 photo shows him performing a difficult sleight-of-hand flourish with his right hand called a "coin star." It requires the ability to move four silver dollars from the center of the hand to positions between the fingertips using only the right-hand fingers. Yes, the flourish might have been posed. But, knowing the man the young Dariel would become, we are confident that he had mastered it. The photo shows something more. It is a professional photo, and it mirrors typical photos of dozens of professional magicians, photos that appeared on Chautauqua programs, in newspapers, and in *The Sphinx*, a monthly magazine for magicians. We suspect that Dariel was aware of this magazine as early as 1913 or 1914. We know he was a subscriber later and corresponded with its irascible editor, "Doc" Wilson. The 1915 photo is not as well posed as the earlier photo, but it tells us something more. Dariel is performing the multiplying billiard balls in this photo, another sleight-of-hand classic and one that he would perform for many years to come. But notice the traditional wand in his hand and the props on the table. Close inspection shows a nickel-plated tube, a wine bottle, and a glass tumbler. This is probably the trick known as the Passe-Passe Bottle, a transposition trick in which a bottle and a water glass exchange places. This would require a second nickel tube, which would probably be on a second table. There are also an egg and a silk on the table, which could be the trick in which a silk handkerchief stuffed into a closed fist turns into an egg that is then broken into a water glass or bowl. Both of those tricks were popular tricks of the day. This suggests strongly that, by the time Dariel was 16 years of age, he was performing magic shows. He writes that in the summer following his junior year in high school he spent his vacation with a tent repertoire dramatic show, playing parts and performing magic specialties between the acts.



This wonderful photograph shows Dariel performing the difficult sleight called the coin star. It is clearly a professional photograph meant to advertise Dariel the Magician.

LaSalle, Illinois continues to be an attractive town. The homes, above left, are on Gooding Street, where Dariel's family lived. The main street in 1916 sat on the south side of town on a bluff overlooking the Canal; the buildings have been restored. The next photo is of the last lock of the Canal facing west, toward the Illinois River. The second row of photos shows the Carnegie Library and, next to it, St. Patrick's Catholic Church which Dariel's mother attended regularly.

Nineteen-fifteen was an important year for Dariel, for during that year he and his family left Annawan and moved to LaSalle, LaSalle County, Illinois, about 50 miles east of Annawan. That spring he was finishing up his sophomore year of high school. We know that the Annawan town council had only recently established a high school and that the plan was to add a class each year until the full high school offerings were available. But in 1915, did they offer a junior year? We do not know. If not, that would have been a reason for the Howard Fitzkee family to move. But it also might simply have been that Howard realized that a thriving canal port city like LaSalle provided more business opportunities for him than found in Annawan. Move they did, to 562 Gooding Street. Their house at that address no longer exists, but, like in Annawan, there are many homes in the old residential areas that were there when the Fitzkees lived there, and a view south on Gooding street still leads one down a gentle hill toward the bluffs and the Illinois & Michigan Canal.

LaSalle, Illinois, and LaSalle County were named for Robert de la Salle, a French explorer of the mid-17th century who established trading forts on the Illinois River not far from present-day LaSalle. While Chicago had ready access to the East, by both lake transportation and railroads, access to the West was more limited. Even the railroad was limited in the amount of cargo it could carry. In the 1840s, enterprising business men began construction on a canal that would connect the lake port of Chicago with the Illinois River, about one hundred miles to the west. Fifteen sets of locks along the way made it possible for freight barges and passenger packets to negotiate the 115-foot drop in level from Chicago to LaSalle. The town of LaSalle on the western end of the canal provided a large turning basin that allowed boats to pass into the Illinois River. This was also the major port for transferring cargo to steamboats which could continue down the Illinois to the Mississippi River. The canal was still actively used in 1915, and LaSalle was a bustling, thriving town of several thousand people, many of them immigrants themselves or descendants from first-generation immigrants.

A drive around the town today reveals many examples of the attractive architecture that lifted LaSalle above the smaller towns that surrounded it. The town hall is a fine example of Georgian architecture, and the beautiful LaSalle Library, built in 1908 with a grant from the Carnegie Foundation at a time when Andrew Carnegie was funding libraries across the nation, is still stately and proud. To step inside and smell the rubbed and polished hard wood floors and mill work is to step back in time. The stores on Front Street overlooking the canal, which is now a historical monument, have been restored and give a sense of how proud the town was and is. Those early immigrants were very religious and there are four beautiful, old Catholic churches in the town built around the turn of the century. In 1915, a German-speaking congregation attended St. Josephs; an English-speaking congregation attended St. Patricks; and a Polish-speaking congregation attended St. Hyacinths. A fourth church attracted an Italian congregation. These four large cathedral-like churches are within a mile of one another. Dariel's father's family was Lutheran, but his mother was Irish Catholic, and the baptismal records for Dariel and his siblings can be found in the Catholic Church in Annawan. Although Dariel was never a religious person, it is likely that as long as he was living at home Dariel attended the Catholic Church on Sundays with his mother, which would have meant St. Patrick's in LaSalle.

Dariel C. Fitzkee 1915

By 1915 Dariel was likely performing magic shows to earn extra money.

The opportunities for a young man of Dariel's capabilities must have seemed to him like the realization of the American Dream. We can easily imagine young Dariel trying to pattern his life after that of President Theodore Roosevelt, the most popular president of his era. He had taken on crime and corruption in New York City and won; he had served as Secretary of the Navy under McKinley and resigned to lead his own troop of Rough Riders, and his charge at the Battle of San Juan Hill made him a national hero. As president, he broke the strangle hold that huge companies had on smaller competition and championed labor reform. He pioneered conservation, forced bills through Congress, and established a number of national parks and monuments. Although he himself came from wealth, Roosevelt overcame a sickly youth and achieved success by virtue of applied intellect and hard work. Anything was possible for anyone! "In life, as in a football game," he said, "the principle is to hit the line hard, don't foul and don't shirk, but hit the line hard."

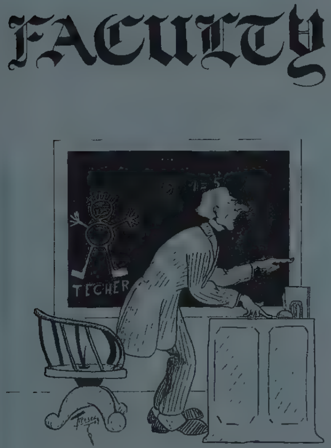
Dariel Fitzkee's high school yearbook tells the story of his instant acceptance and rise to prominence in academic and extra-curricular circles. While he did not have a sickly childhood, he was small of stature, around 5 feet 4 inches in height. He would never be a big man in stature, not much over 5 feet 6 inches, but it is clear that never deterred him. He was large in spirit. He "hit the line hard," both figuratively and literally. Like Teddy Roosevelt, Dariel loved football and was a star running back on his school's football team his junior and senior years. The yearbook says of him, "Fitz could always be depended upon to break through the line. His long suit was to make spectacular end runs, generally resulting in touchdowns." Dariel also was on the basketball team both his junior and se-

Dariel had a wonderful time at LaSalle-Peru High School. He was elected Senior Class President and was a star on the football team. In the group photo he is in the front row, center. He was given the honor of holding the team ball. At right is a blurry old photo of the school in 1917.

nior years. But his major sport was track and field, and in addition to being selected captain of the team his senior year, he was a bona fide star. In the *LaSalle Daily Tribune* for May 18, 1917, a reporter writes about the LaSalle County track and field championships: "Dariel Fitzkee was the individual star of the games, taking three firsts in the sprints, a second in the 120 yard hurdles and a fourth in the broad jump." That is, he placed in five events! His time was 5.2 seconds in the 50 yard dash, and 10.2 seconds in the 100 yard dash – very fast times for that era. Dariel's time in the 100 yard dash was good enough to get him an invitation to the Stagg Games – the state track and field championships – held at the University of Chicago. On Monday, June 4, we find a report about the results of the games. Twenty-eight sprinters competed in the event, beginning with four preliminary heats. Dariel won the fourth prelim in the time of 11.0 seconds, well off his best, but the fastest time in the prelims. This was followed a little later in the day with two semi-final heats. Dariel placed fourth in his semi-final event. The championship heat of the 100 yard dash could only accommodate seven sprinters. Dariel and the fourth place finisher of the other semi-final heat had to compete against each other in a run off. Dariel won that sprint in 10.6 seconds, which put him in the finals. He had run three demanding sprints to reach that point and would run against six other sprinters who had run but two races and had significantly more time to recuperate since their last sprint than Dariel had. In his fourth race of the day, Dariel failed to place. But he returned home to LaSalle a champion, and as long as the 50 yard dash was run in the LaSalle-Peru high school, his time in the 50 yard dash was never bettered or equaled!

Sports was just one area in which Dariel excelled. Anyone who ever knew him as an adult will not be surprised to learn that he was on the debate team his junior and senior

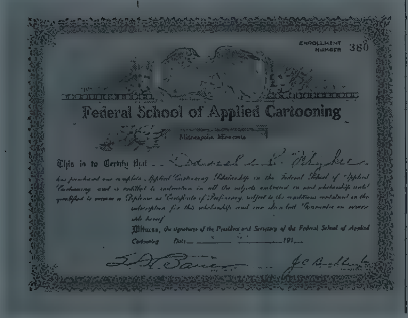
Track was Dariel's best sport. He held several school and conference records, and ran in the state championships. But he also loved drama and played the lead in the senior play. In this cast photo for the play "The Freshman," (below) Dariel is fourth from the left.



At far left is one of Dariel's cartoon illustrations from his senior yearbook, and at bottom his certificate from The Federal School of Cartooning, dated 1918.

years and was elected the senior class president. He played the violin in the orchestra both years, and as a member of the Zetalethean (drama) society was in the school play his junior year, and in his senior year played John Worden, the lead in *The Freshman*, a very popular play of the era.

Dariel had an untrained artistic talent, and the spirit of the yearbook is lifted by his cheerful cartoon drawings. He was ambitious and always looking for ways to improve his talents and perhaps use them to earn or supplement a living. Reacting to the well-deserved compliments for his yearbook artwork, Dariel enrolled and successfully completed a correspondence course with the Federal School of Applied Cartooning, located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the November following his graduation from high school. He also enjoyed writing, which is no surprise to us; and several short pieces appear in the yearbook. His writing ability was good enough that during the year following graduation he worked as a reporter for the Post Publishing Company, publisher of one of the area newspapers.



ENROLLMENT NUMBER 380

Federal School of Applied Cartooning

Minneapolis, Minnesota

This is to Certify that

has purchased one complete Applied Cartooning Scholarship in the Federal School of Applied Cartooning and is entitled to instruction in all the subjects embraced in said scholarship until qualified to receive a Diploma or Certificate of Proficiency subject to the conditions contained in the subscription for this scholarship and our Ironclad Guarantee on reverse side hereof

Witness, the signatures of the President and Secretary of the Federal School of Applied Cartooning. Date 191

Dariel graduated high school in the spring of 1917. The United States had entered the First World War the previous year amidst much patriotic fanfare, not unlike the celebrations at the start of the Civil War and the Spanish-American War. There were still

Civil War veterans living in most communities. They, like soldiers of all generations, fell into two categories – those who never fully recovered from the horrors of war and chose not to talk about their experiences and those who either had little experience or, for whatever reason, believed their stature in the community to be enhanced by their stories – many of them somewhat questionable. The Spanish-American War hardly qualified as a war, with fewer than 400 battle deaths. This gave citizens a false sense of the realities of war; and once again, as is so often the case with young men far removed from such realities, thousands of eager American Troops sailed to England and France. Nearly 60,000 Americans would die in the war, and another 150,000 would be wounded. Dariel was just 19 when he graduated from high school. He lived at home and worked for a year as a newspaper reporter, as has been mentioned, while he tried to decide what his role should be in the war effort. On September 12 of 1918, he dutifully signed up for the draft. It is from his draft registration card that we get the best description of Dariel at age 20: Birth date, May 13, 1898; medium height (5 feet 4 inches); and medium build with blue eyes and brown hair.

Dariel and the other members of the Students Army Training Corps bunked in barracks at the University of Chicago. Dariel and his pal, Bill Marlatt, on the steps of the Fitzkee home in La Salle. The were fast friends while Dariel lived in Chicago. At right, Howard Fitzkee in the early 1920s.

Dariel was apparently drafted almost immediately after he registered, for he was soon enrolled as a private in the Students Army Training Corps, located at the University of Chicago, the site of his state track and field championships. Realizing that they lacked the required officer material to staff its needs, early in 1918 the Army established this program to use nearly 150 colleges and universities as training facilities for new military personnel. Dual programs were established on many campuses, one for students fully registered at the college or university and one with special emphasis on trades, from carpentry to radio operators, for regular recruits. The Army needed qualified officers in those trade areas as much as they did in the fighting forces. Instructors were hired under temporary contract, and the colleges were reimbursed for the expense of providing facilities and staff for the Corps. In Dariel's case, the cadets were housed in large tents. Training consisted of drill and classroom activities. The cadets were required to stand at attention and to speak with clearness and confidence when reciting in the classroom; the possession of such qualities of speech were considered to be of military importance.

But the program was short lived. Within two months of Dariel's enlistment, the war was over, with the armistice signed on November 11, 1918. The Student Army Training Corps was disbanded, and Dariel was mustered out on November 27, 1918. Interestingly, he was paid $60 for his services on March 16, 1919, and the Army always considered cadets, even those who were enrolled a few weeks, veterans of the war.

When Dariel returned to LaSalle and his parents home, his mother, Cora, was seven or eight months pregnant. On January 28, 1919, she gave birth to her sixth child, a girl named Patricia Marie. Just two months later, on March 21, she passed from this life at 5:30 p.m. The cause of death is recorded as "exhaustion" and pulmonary tuberculosis is listed as a contributory cause. That is, her death was a result of complications due to childbirth. She was only 38 years of age. Little Patricia survived only another six weeks, and died on May 19, 1919.

As she lay dying, Cora called Dariel to her side. He was her first born, he had inherited her zest for living and love of music. All of his life Dariel Fitzkee revered women, an attitude he no doubt developed as a result of a closeness to his mother. "Promise me that you will watch after the little ones," she asked of him. He gave her that promise and in his later years spoke sadly of the loss of both his mother and his baby sister.

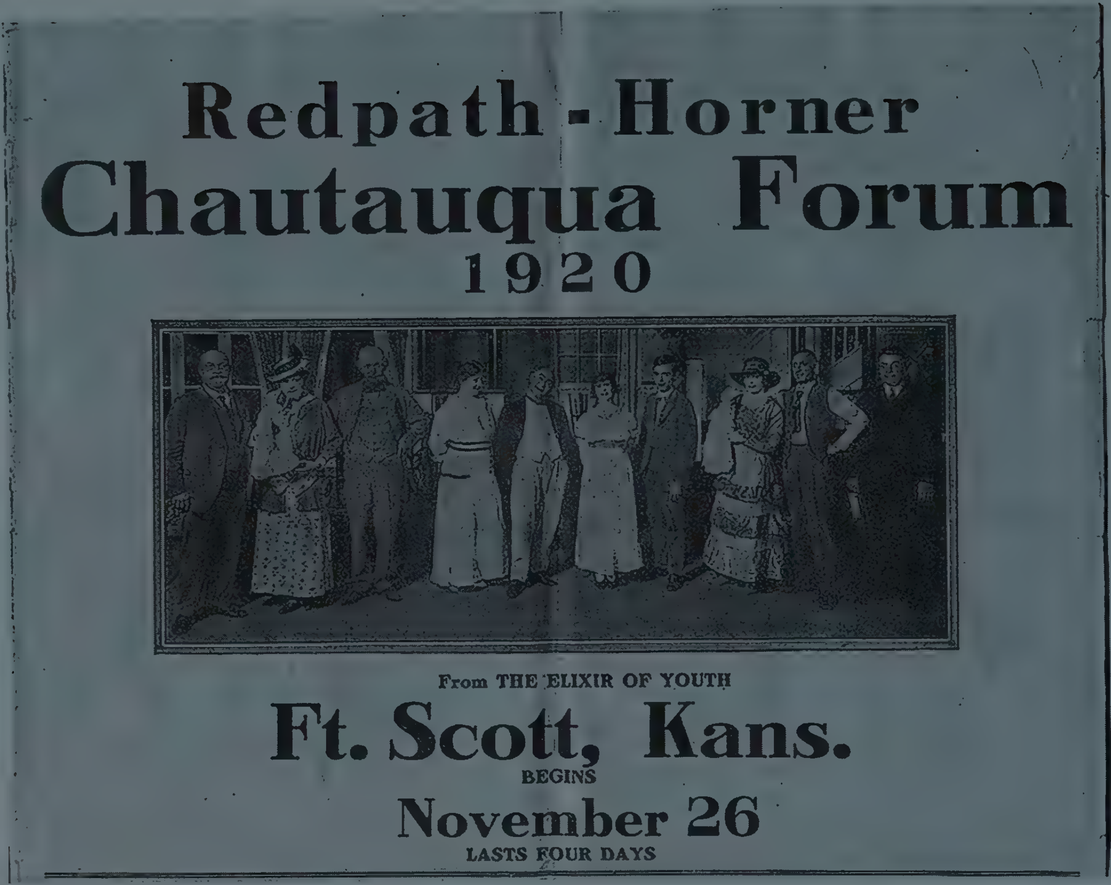
That was a sad time for the Fitzkee family. Little Coralyn was only two-and-a-half years old at the time her mother and sister died. In his grief and with his responsibilities to the older children, Howard could not have provided for Coralyn properly. She needed a mother's care. Therefore, Coralyn went to live with Howard's sister, Sarah, and her husband Elijah Chapler, in Atkinson. We are not sure how long she lived with them; she is listed with them in the 1920 census, but her name does not appear in the 1930 census. That may well have been the time Coralyn was in San Francisco with Dariel and his family.

In November of 1918, we read of a Lawrence Fitzke, a LaSalle resident, who had a heart attack while working on a brick wall on a job in Molene, Illinois, just across the Mississippi River from Davenport, Iowa. When he fell he struck his head, which caused his death. He left a wife, Mary Welter, and several children. The Welter family was of German extraction and can be found in York County census reports in the late 1800s. We do not know who Lawrence was or how he was related to Dariel and his family line. The 1919 LaSalle directory lists her as living in Howard Fitzkee's home on Gooding Street. Clearly these Fitzkee families were related in some way, whether or not Lawrence spelled his name with one "e"; and Howard and his family took Mary and her children in until she was able to provide for herself. Later directories show Mary Fitzke and her children living in Peru Township, a town adjacent to LaSalle. That 1919 directory also shows a Frank Fitzke, also a bricklayer, living in a bedroom apartment on First Street in LaSalle. They were all undoubtedly related to Dariel in some way.

The 1920 LaSalle census, taken in January, 1920, shows the Howard Fitzkee household to consist of himself, age 48, listed as a carpenter; Dariel, age 21, who was working as a musician for a concert company; Mino, age 19, a clerk in a clothing store; Richard, age 11; Amelia, age 6; Hiram Comp, age 67 (who was Howard's father-in-law); and a 30-year-old German servant girl whose name is not clear on the census report. As mentioned above, daughter Coralyn Fitzky, age 3, was listed as living with her Aunt Sarah and Uncle Elijah in Atkinson. Those were days of family responsibility, and such arrangements were not uncommon.

But what was that concert company for which Dariel worked? We are not certain, but in Dariel's scrapbook, kept from his high school years through 1941, we find a Redpath-

In 1920 Dariel listed his occupation as a musician for a concert company. We believe that he was playing for Chautauqua concerts, which is why this program was in his scrapbook.



Redpath - Horner
Chautauqua Forum
1920

From THE ELIXIR OF YOUTH

Ft. Scott, Kans.
BEGINS
November 26
LASTS FOUR DAYS

Horner Chautauqua Forum program from Ft. Scott, Kansas., beginning November 26, 1920, and lasting four days. The Horner Institute of Fine Arts, Kansas City, Missouri, was the co-sponsor of this Chautauqua series. It is likely that this program played in assembly halls, considering the date. Season tickets were $2.00 for adults and $1.00 for children, and all ticket prices were still subject to the regular war tax of 10 percent, even though the war had been over for two years. However, tickets for individual events could be purchased for 35 cents for an afternoon show and 50 cents for an evening show, except the night of the play, for which tickets were priced at 75 cents. All children's single admissions were 20 cents, and all prices were subject to a war tax of 10 percent.

The program for the Chautauqua Forum was as follows: Day one, afternoon, a full concert by the Cosmopolitan Male Trio, playing all sorts of instruments from xylophone to bagpipes. That evening they played a repeat performance as the lead-in act for Ernest C. Mobley's lecture, "America at the Crossroads." Pastor of a large Texas Church, he was a trustee of Texas Christian University, a journalist with the *Dallas and Galveston News* and was present at the World Peace Conference. The afternoon program on day two featured The Barnabys, whose program ranged from the "make-up" of the Italian and the gray-whiskered man to music, pianologues, readings and dramatic sketches that furnished "refreshing and wholesome entertainment."

That night The Barnabys were the lead act for Argus, the Magician. "It is proverbial," the program stated, "that fathers had to go to Chautauqua on Magician day 'just to take the children.' Father always wants to get there early, too, so the boys can get a seat. Observe, though, that father is usually right along on the front row – does this to take care of the boys, so he says. But ten to one the chances are he does this so he won't miss any of the tricks; he wants to find out for sure just how they are done.

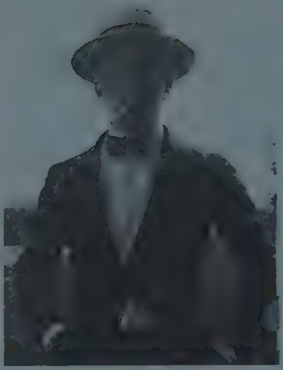
"And that's right! If you haven't a boy to bring with you, better borrow one. Failing that, come anyway...for there is no entertainment on the whole program that will overshadow this one for real delight and amusement and laughs with the children. It will smooth out many wrinkles and help keep you young. Many words have been used in attempting to depict his performance: magic, illusion, spiritualism and psychic sensations. It is a combination of them all that gives his entertainment balanced effects and proper climaxes."

The Fort Scott, Kansas Chautauqua program featured Argus, the Magician on Thursday nights. It is probable that Dariel played the violin in the company band.

Day three featured the dramatic readings of the comely Myrtle Tuller... "you'll like her immensely." That evening the audience was treated to the play, "The Elixir of Youth," a comedy particularly adapted to the Chautauqua platform, and presented by capable New York players. Here is what newspapers have said about the play: "The play was one continuous round of funny situations, and the actors were real stars. It was a sure cure for the blues." The final afternoon featured the "Old Home Singers," five musicians, each one an artist, singing the old favorites – the songs our grandparents knew and loved. They were accompanied by Raymond B. Talbert, who spoke to the crowd about the social and economic problems of America, including strikes, profiteering and general social unrest. That evening the Old Home Singers presented an expanded version of their afternoon performance to bring the four-day program to an uplifting close.

Why did Dariel keep this program in his scrapbook? Perhaps he had become friends with magician Arthur Gilbert, whose stage name was Argus and who would marry one of Ed Reno's daughters and perform with Ed and his family in later years as the "Reno Funmakers." Incidentally, Argus was half Indian. But we also think it likely that Dariel was playing the violin as one of the musicians who accompanied some of the acts. We do not know of any other reason he would have been in Ft. Scott, Kansas at that time. We recall that the 1920 census listed Dariel as living at home and in the employ of a concert company as a musician. Our guess is that throughout 1920, Dariel was a musician with the Chautauqua and perhaps Lyceum circuits.

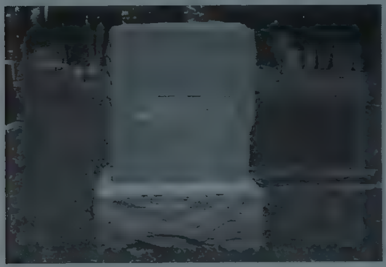
At the same time, Dariel never doubted his abilities as a writer, and his scrapbook shows a rejection letter addressed to him at his Gooding Street address from The Frank A. Munsey Company dated January 8, 1920. "Dear Sir: The color in THE HOODOO STAND is rather well done, also the setting is new, but the plot is conventional. It does not convince nor interest. A little more originality will produce better results for you. Very



Dariel in 1920, during his time as a professional musician. The charming photograph of the girl was in Dariel's scrapbook – ample evidence that he had an eye for lovely ladies. She was likely a member of the troupe.

Truly Yours, The Editor. P.S. Will be glad to read the other stories referred to in your letter of December 22nd, 1919." The Munsey Company was publisher of *Argosy Magazine*, which was originally established in 1882 and by 1920 was noted for its pulp fiction content. Would that we had a copy of THE HOODOO STAND to include in this book! It would no doubt send shivers up our spines!

In any case, show business was in his blood. His love of magic – and we do not doubt that he met every traveling magician who came anywhere near where he was living – his love of acting born of simple school and town productions, his love of music, and his talent as a violinist were all directing him toward a profession in the performing arts.



The Fitzkee gravesite in St. Vincent's Cemetery, LaSalle, Illinois, where Dariel's mother, Cora, and infant sister, Patricia, were buried in March and may, 1919, respectively. Dariel's father, Daniel, who died October 11, 1935.

Chapter 5

Chicago – The City of the Big Shoulders

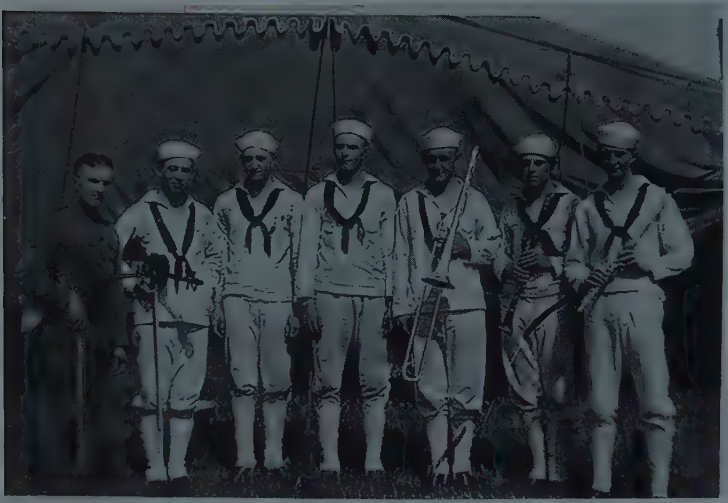
As 1920 drew to a close, Dariel Fitzkee, age 22, would have begun to look forward. He was ambitious; he was smart; he was talented. It was not enough to be merely a musician in an orchestra supporting the headliners on the Chautauqua circuit. He longed to be a star himself. He was the class president. He was the captain of the team. He scored the touchdowns. He set the sprint records. He was a musician. He was a writer. He was an artist. He was a magician. What was his destiny?

Early 1921 finds Dariel in Chicago with his good friend, Bill Marlatt, planning a career in show business and possibly preparing for the summer Chautauqua season. Although Dariel was a year older than Bill, they had been chums at LaSalle High School. Bill had joined the Army and served as a private in the medical department at the Army's General Hospital in Deerfield, just north of Chicago. Upon mustering out, he stayed in Chicago and became involved in some form of show business. We suspect that he may have gone to work for the John B. Rogers Producing Company, which was established in 1903 as a supplier of costumes, sets, lights, and scripts for amateur theater. Community fund-raising productions, from plays to historical pageants, were extremely popular throughout the first decades of the 20th century, and John B. Rogers would not only supply everything from costumes to scripts but also provide a production manager, or director, who would travel to the town in question to train and rehearse the amateur actors and direct the production. They quite possibly had an office in Chicago.

Michigan Avenue at the time Dariel lived in Chicago.

Chicago was one of the great American cities in the early 1920s, full of flavor and excitement with a robust architecture and the romance of Michigan Avenue running north along the lake, teeming with traffic. It had many nicknames including "The Windy City," a reference to false promises by politicians of the late 19th century. Carl Sandburg called it "The City of the Big Shoulders.... Show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning." Dariel had enjoyed his time there as a member of the Student Army Training Corps and no doubt explored the city in his free time, attending vaudeville in the theater district when he had the chance and perhaps hanging out at the Chicago Magic Company on Dearborn Street or browsing the magic books at the Gilbert Magic Company shop. Perhaps he met the great Werner "Dorny" Dornfield, a top vaudeville star and someone who would cross Dariel's path in the future. It is possible that he visited a meeting of the Chicago Assembly #3 of The Society of American Magicians, although we find no record in their minutes of his being there.

By this time, it is possible that Dariel had already been hired by Mr. H. L. Bland



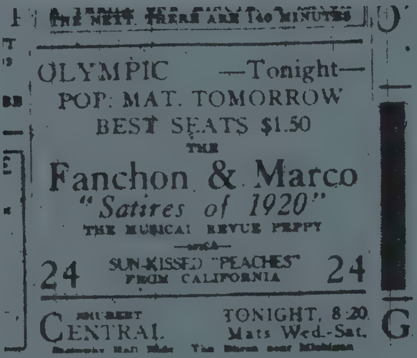
In both of these photos of The Marine Band Dariel is standing at left, holding his violin.

of Des Moines College, Des Moines, Iowa, to perform with and manage "Bland's Musical Marines" and to take them on tour the following summer with the Midland Chautauqua Circuit. The Midland Circuit was operated by Myers & Trimble, Chicago, Illinois. We do not know the details of the arrangement; one possibility is that Bland hired the musicians and hired Dariel to be the leader and manager. It is also possible that Dariel was given the responsibility of hiring the musicians. If the latter was the case, he would have had to put his band together, rehearse, and possibly audition with Myers & Trimble to secure the booking; and it is likely that he was living in Chicago at this time because that is where he would find seven other musicians.

The band, which Dariel called "The Marine Band," consisted of six, and sometimes seven, musicians plus himself as leader and manager. We have two photographs of the band. In the first, Dariel, holding his violin, is dressed like a military officer. The other musicians are dressed in sailor whites of the era: long-sleeved white tunics; white trousers with white lace-up leggings; black shoes; a Navy blue or black kerchief, rolled, placed under the collar and tied low in the front in a knot. Of course, they wore the traditional white sailor hat. In that photo, we see a second violin, a trombone, a flute, and a clarinet. Two musicians are without their instruments, and the band is standing in front of the Chautauqua tent. In the second photo there are seven musicians plus Dariel. Dariel is again dressed as a military officer, and the musicians are dressed in blue instead of white, with white leggings and the traditional white sailor hat. This time we see a trumpet and a drum in addition to the other instruments. The band is standing in front of a building, perhaps some kind of assembly hall or perhaps a building on the campus of Des Moines College. Like vaudeville acts, Chautauqua acts needed a gimmick. Presumably "The Marine Band" consisted of young men who had served in the Navy in the recent war and were now earning their livings by entertaining the citizens. The appeal was to patriotism and appreciation of the boys who had served their country, as well as to the popularity of the music of the day. Another successful group on the Chautauqua Circuit was a group of six singers and a pianist that called themselves "Phil Clark and his Marching Men of Song." They also dressed like sailors; but, where the members of Dariel's "Marine Band" appear to be young men like himself and probably did not serve in the Navy, "The Marching Men of Song" were mature men well into their twenties and thirties and might very well have been veterans. We suspect that Bland got his idea from seeing that group or a photograph of that group. In any case, it worked, and that summer "The Marine Band" traveled the Midland Chautauqua Circuit.

In January, 1921, Dariel was approaching his 23rd birthday. Although his five feet, five or six inches was small in stature by today's measure, he was of average height for his time and carried himself with an air of supreme confidence and panache. He had lean, hard, devil-may-care, rugged good looks. His blue eyes, when you could see them behind his dark glasses, glinted steel blue; and even bigger men would think twice before crossing this cocky, banty rooster with the ever-present cigarette dangling from the corner of his mouth. He always, then and forever, dressed impeccably in the latest fashion. He and his pal Bill Marlatt were two of a kind in this regard; and, if his scrapbook is any indication, they cut quite a swath among the lovely ladies of the era.

We can imagine Dariel and Bill chatting amiably, perhaps over a glass of "hooch," or bootlegged alcohol, for it was the era of prohibition, and Dariel became a social drinker early in life. Maybe they were in one or the other's apartment, or perhaps they shared an apartment. As he leafed through a recent *Chicago Tribune*, the attractive photograph of Lucile Harmon would have caught Dariel's eye. "Hey, Bill," he might have said, "there's going to be a benefit for Local No. 2 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees." Holding up the paper to show a photograph of a fetching young woman he would have continued, " This Lucile Harmon is going to be there. Listen to this, 'Among those who have volunteered their services are... Sophie Tucker and her syncopated band, Mary Eaton, Ray Dobley, Jack Donohue and Carl Randall of 'The Follies,' Fanchon and Marco...' whoever they are, this '...Lucile Harmon, Muriel Stryker and the Wright Dancers of Satires of 1920...'"



THE NEXT. THERE ARE TWO MINUTES

OLYMPIC —Tonight—
POP. MAT. TOMORROW
BEST SEATS $1.50
THE
Fanchon & Marco
"Satires of 1920"
THE MUSICAL REVUE PEPPY
—with—
24 SUN-KISSED "PEACHES" FROM CALIFORNIA 24

SHUBERT
CENTRAL
TONIGHT, 8:20
Mats Wed.-Sat.

Dariel and Bill Marlatt in Chicago, 1920-21. "Men about town!" This is the Fanchon & Marco ad Dariel found in the Tribune advertising the "Sun-kissed Peaches" from California.

"Hey," Bill might have replied, "Muriel Stryker is a friend of mine. I told you about her. She's a dancer from San Francisco. Finkler saw her and The Wright Dancers in Youngstown awhile back and had breakfast with Muriel and some of the other dancers. That paper's a couple of weeks old. Hand me today's, and let's see if they are playing somewhere in town."

Leafing through the entertainment section they would have come across a full page

This photo of Marcia was taken while she was dancing with the Wright Dancers, the dance team that became the "Sun-Kissed Peaches" with Fanchon & Marco.

The Olympic Theater where Dariel met Marcia Adair and lost his heart.

of ads. "Let's see. Here's the Majestic. That Dornfield fellow is playing there with 'Painless Magic.' Here's the Garrick... McVicker's... Here it is. The Olympic – Fanchon & Marco, 'Satires of 1920,' The Musical Review Peppy with 'Sun-Kissed Peaches from California.' A buck and a half for best seats, but the half-buck seats aren't so bad at The Olympic.

"Well, there's nothin' else goin' on tonight. Let's go eat at that Chop Suey place next to the Olympic and then take in the show. Maybe you can get your friend to introduce me to that Lucile Harmon. She's a doll!" He might even have said "she's, the cat's meow." Who knows? Although Dariel's daughter maintains that Dariel would never have used "college" slang. "Consider 'La Boheme' when you think of Dariel and his friends at that time," she says, "writers, theater, music, producers. They were all having a wonderful time starving to death following their artistic bents."

Highlights from Percy Hammond's review in the *Tribune*, titled "A Review from the Golden Gate," gives us a good idea of what Dariel and Bill witnessed that night. "We adored [the show]. But it was so naïve and old fashioned cabaretting, so ingenuous and so rural a festival that it is hard to believe that it ever had been a devil in its own home town." [California, even San Francisco, was still considered a "hick state" by the sophisticated Percy Hammond and most of Chicago and New York City and all points east of the Mississippi!] "However, Fanchon and Marco dance the ancient restaurant dances very well indeed.... 'Please like us!' they seem to ask.... Miss Muriel Stryker, a pretty girl peeled to the rim of disclosure, presents herself in pleasing contortions. The comedians sing the old-fashioned parodies of popular songs and the chorus shows their old fashioned bare legs in the old-fashioned way.... [The chorus] may be described as peculiar. Good looking, sun-kissed, no doubt, and obliging, but suburban and not very well painted or upholstered.... They are roughed Chautauqua, pleasing us, mind you, but also proving that there is more than three hours' difference between San Francisco and New York." Ouch!

But Dariel *was* Chautauqua! He would have loved the show!

"Can you get us backstage?" he asked Bill after the show.

"Probably not. Muriel's mother chaperones them and she won't let any men back there. We'll need to go out back and wait at the stage door. Do you still want to meet Lucile Harmon?"

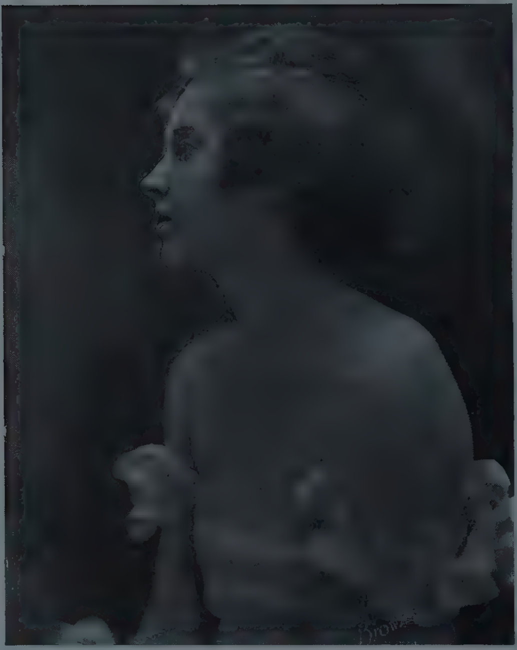
"No. I want to meet that little brunette. You know the one. I pointed her out to you." And here he likely would have exclaimed, "She really *is* the cat's meow!" Well, he might not have said it, but he would have thought it! And that is where they met – at the stage door of the old Olympic.

Marcia, left, and her cousin Murial when the two of them lived with their grandmother on the apricot ranch in Saratoga.

Marcia Adair, that little brunette, was born to Neva Adair Wilson and William Walter Wilson on October 12, 1901, in the small town of Watsonville, California, about ten miles from the Pacific Ocean just off highway 1, between Santa Cruz and Monterey. Her father was a Canadian who had immigrated to California where he became a schoolteacher. He was teaching in Santa Cruz in the late 1880s when he met and married Neva Adair, who was his student.

Their first child was a boy, Elsworth, born around 1890. Eleven years later, shortly after Marcia was born, the family moved to Los Gatos when William was hired as principal of Los Gatos High School. At that time William purchased a small apricot ranch in Saratoga a few miles away, where Marcia's mother's parents lived as caretakers. But, when Marcia was about five years old, her father died of a burst appendix. This was about the time of the great San Francisco earthquake that devastated that city. The surrounding rural areas, which included Los Gatos and Saratoga, were not greatly affected by the earthquake, although the chimney of Marcia's home collapsed and the family had to move to the ranch for a time. San Francisco itself recovered remarkably fast from the earthquake and was soon the thriving city of promise it had been before.

Marcia's widowed mother moved to San Francisco and left Marcia in the care of her parents, Henry and Eliza Adair, who were living on a ranch in Saratoga. At this time Elsworth went to sea on a merchant ship under the watchful eye of an uncle who was a ship's engineer and eventually Elsworth became an engineer as well. Marcia's aunt Anetta Lewis was recently divorced, and she, too, left her daughter, Muriel, with the Adairs when



This photograph of Marcia was Dariel's favorite.

she went to San Francisco as a milliner, sewing making women's hats and bonnets. Thus Marcia and Muriel, both about four or five years old, lived together on the ranch with their grandparents. Obviously a strong bond was formed, and the girls, more sisters than cousins, shared an idyllic childhood roaming the ranch.

Henry Adair died about the time the girls were eight or nine years old, and within a few years their grandmother, who was almost blind, was no longer able to care for the girls. Marcia's mother's work as a private nurse and then as director of an orphanage in Oakland necessitated Marcia boarding with various families, and she moved to Pinole, a small town on the east side of the San Francisco Bay, to live with her mother's aunt. Her cousin Muriel moved to San Francisco to live with her mother after leaving the ranch.

After graduating grammar school in Pinole, Marcia moved to San Francisco to live with her mother and enrolled in San Francisco Girl's High School. A year or two later, her mother became the school nurse at the San Rafael Military Academy. Marcia continued at Girl's High, even though this necessitated a commute by electric train to Sausalito and then a ferry ride across the bay to San Francisco. That did not leave much time for a social life!

Muriel was also a student at Girl's High, although Marcia would recount that Muriel made it through only because Marcia and other friends "dragged" her through. Muriel was a joyous, happy person who had little interest in academics or in any of the mundane daily details of life, for that matter.

The Wright Dancers was a popular dancing troop in the San Francisco area and Mrs. Wright's sister, Marvel Ladd, ran a dancing school. Muriel attended that school and did well enough that she was hired by Mrs. Wright to join her dancers. Muriel's mother, "Aunt Nettie," was hired as a chaperone to travel with the girls.

Meanwhile, Marcia's life with her mother was miserable. Her mother, highly critical and judgmental, was not an easy person to live with. Finally Marcia moved to San Pedro in southern California where she lived first with her brother and his wife and then with friends until she graduated from San Pedro High School. Muriel persuaded Marcia to return to San Francisco where, after a crash course with Marvel Ladd, she joined the Wright Dancers under the stage name of Marcia Adair, taking her mother's maiden name. In 1918 or 1919, The Wright Dancers came to the attention of Fanchon and Marco.

Fanchon was Fanny Wolf, daughter of a Los Angeles clothing store proprietor. She studied piano – her brother Mike (Marco), the fiddle. Together they studied dance and became adept at the popular cabaret dances of the day: adagio, apache, ballroom, and the newest craze, the Charleston. They entertained at lodge parties and picnics and graduated to a dinner show in Tait's famed San Francisco restaurant. In one of their signature acts, Marco played the violin while the two of them danced. Their success led to the establish-

The Fanchon & Marco dancers had great success for several years playing the West Coast. This scene (left) was typical of the type of shows the company produced.

ment of a dance studio and finally the addition of a line of girls to their show.

Fanchon was the creative brains of the team. She realized that, because small cinema houses wanted to stage shows but could not afford them, there was a market for a small, fifteen-minute production number that blended costumes and tunes with whatever the girls were doing. The easiest way to expand was to bring in an act that was already established. It was probably while performing in San Francisco that they became acquainted with the Wright Dancers, and dream became reality. The production played one, two and three night stands at legitimate theaters and Cinemas throughout the West and Midwest. A week in one town was a long engagement. Sometime in 1920, Fanchon and Marco suggested that The Wright Dancers be billed as the "Sun-Kissed Peaches" as part of their production, "Satires of 1920." Early in 1921, they took their show to Chicago as a warm-up to Broadway. This was the show that Dariel and Bill saw that January night.

Percy Hammond's review was right. This was a naïve and old-fashioned show, much more like Chautauqua than Broadway. But it was Marco and Fanchon's first major show! *The New York Time's* review in May of that year would echo Hammond: "Good looks and good nature rather than newness or cleverness distinguish this California product which fills a vacant stretch at the Globe for a period of four weeks."

However, Fanchon and Marco would go on to great success, with dozens of shows in dozens of theaters, although their focus would be in the West rather than Broadway. At one point, their studio on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood became a factory for mass production of 15-minute shows, and they had as many as 52 different units on the road at one time. They needed bright youngsters who would work cheap, and the Fanchon and Marco School of Theater nurtured such future stars as Janet Gaynor, Myrna Loy, Bing Crosby, Martha Raye, Mary Martin, Dorothy Lamour and many other stars.

In this glamor photograph of Murial Stryker, Marcia Adair's cousin, we see the great beauty that made her a Zigfield Girl. Stryker was one of her stepfather's names. Her father was very religious and condemned her stage career.

Marcia's cousin, Muriel Stryker, singled out by Hammon and again by the New York critic as "a particularly daring dancer ... whose style is of the Oriental," was "discovered" by Flo Zigfield and became a star in the Zigfield Follies in the early twenties. By the early thirties she moved to St. Louis and managed her own group of dancers that played throughout the Midwest until she married in the mid-1930s. After her husband's death in the early 1960s, she returned to the West Coast and lived in San Rafael where she could always be close to Marcia and Marcia's family.

The Marcia Adair that Dariel Fitzkee fell in love with that January was a lovely, gentle, insecure person, which is not surprising considering her childhood of shuttling from one family to another. She must have felt a sense of abandonment, and in later years she shared with her daughter that she never felt wanted as a child and considered herself an intruder. It was her great, good fortune that her husband adored her and never failed to tell her how beautiful she was and how lucky he was to be married to her. This reinforcement went on until the day he died and reveals a tenderness and sensitivity in Dariel that most people never saw.

We are not sure how long Fanchon and Marco and the Sun-kissed Peaches played Chicago – a few weeks, perhaps – but, however long, Marcia and Dariel spent as much time together as possible. February passed into March, March into April, and April into May. The Fanchon and Marco dancers began to rehearse for their Broadway debut. The name "Satires of 1920" had been dropped in favor of a variation of the Sun-Kissed Peaches, "SUN-KIST, a Musical Extravaganza." As the departure date loomed ahead, we can imagine the turmoil that beset the young couple. Could Dariel pack up and go to New York, too? No. He not only had a commitment with the Midland Chautauqua, he was also performing in two one-act plays in May. But, if Marcia went without him, would he ever see her again? Would she find someone else? Chicago was sophisticated, but it was not New York City. How could Dariel compete with those slick, showbiz types and wealthy playboys who would certainly be after Marcia. But could he ask her to give up her own career?

The New York Times review of "SUN-KIST" for May 24, 1921, lists Marcia Adair as "Miss Smiles" in the show. But Marcia Adair was in Chicago, as Mrs. Dariel Fitzkee. They had been married on Saturday, May 14, 1921, by a justice of the peace. Obviously the wedding caught Fanchon and Marco off guard, for they didn't even have time to change the cast listings in their publicity. But Marcia's was not a large role, and no doubt one of the other Wright Dancers was able to step in. Marcia surely regretted that her cousin, her best friend, was not present at the wedding. Bill Marlatt was not there either. Perhaps the young couple preferred it that way.

The night before their wedding Dariel was in two one-act plays at the American Conservatory of Music, in Chicago. In the first, "An Amateur Rehearsal," he played Mr. Frank Thompson, the coach, and in the second, "Temperament," he played the lead as Hugh, a musician. It makes us smile to see him listed in the credits as Mr. Fitz Kee. These plays were presented by A. Louise Suess. We don't know if she was a professor at the American Conservatory or if she had her own theatrical group in Chicago that played a variety of venues. We don't know if Dariel was enrolled in an acting class or if he was a paid actor, and we also do not know if he participated in other such productions that winter and early spring of 1921. It is interesting to see that he was continuing the interest in drama he began in LaSalle and Annawan.

Very soon after they were married, Marcia realized that Dariel's head was in the clouds as he pursued a Bohemian lifestyle as an actor and musician. His friends were all would-be actors, musicians, writers, and producers, but there wasn't enough money in dreams to live on. Marcia picked up dance openings until she was offered a job with a dance troupe going to Dallas, Texas. Dallas would pay the rent! She immediately took the job and by June was in Texas. While there, she came into her own – no mother, no Aunt Nettie, no Fanchon , no Marco, no Dariel. She found out that she was capable of making her own decisions, of taking care of herself; and she did very well at it. At one point she organized an uprising of the girls of the troupe and demanded more money and better working conditions – and won! She surprised Dariel with her determination and "guts." Dariel often said to his daughter, with great admiration, "Never underestimate your moth-

er. She's a scrapper!" Shortly after Marcia left for Texas, Dariel was on the road with "The Marine Band."

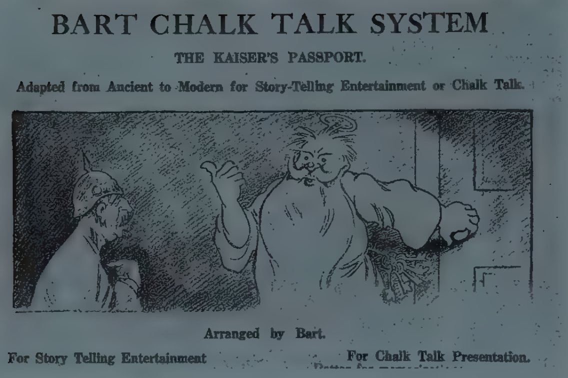
We do not know too much about Dariel and his summer tour. There is a letter in Dariel's files from a Mr. Moon, Secretary of the Midland Chautauqua Circuit, located at the Midland's national office in Des Moines dated June 23, 1921, and addressed to Mr. Daniel [sic] Fitzkee, Mgr., Bland's Musical Marines, Tompson, Iowa, General Delivery, Chautauqua Attraction. "Dear Mr. Fitzkee:" it reads. "We have a letter today from Mr. Moore concerning the blowdown at Mt. Auburn at the first of the week. He tells us of the splendid work of the Marines in endeavoring to keep the tent up. Just want to drop you this line to tell you that we appreciate very much the assistance you were to Mr. Moore at this time of emergency." That was no doubt an exciting event. Thunderstorms with hail and strong winds, often gale-force winds, and even the occasional tornado were always a threat to tent shows. It is not surprising that Dariel and his boys stepped in when needed.

Dariel took this photograph of the Midland Chautauqua tent where his Marine Band performed. These tents were packed for every show, and one had to get there early to avoid a seat behind a tent pole.

But all was not roses for "The Marine Band." We have another letter written by Mr. Moon to H. L. Bland, with a copy to Dariel, dated July 26, 1921. "Dear Mr. Bland. Herewith find copy of a report we have just received from one of our Chautauquas. Wanted to call your particular attention to a report on the marines. We have had a complaint a time or two that they weren't as gracious as they should be to the audiences. I don't know just why. I know that they can't meet all requests and it wouldn't be wise if they could, but on the other hand if there is a universal request it seems to me it might be wise for them to grant it even though they had to leave out some number of their special program. At any rate I think it would be well for you to write the manager of the company."

We can imagine the great patience that Chautauqua acts must have had to muster in order to respond to the myriad requests of their audiences, both while on stage and off. But these were not carnivals or circuses. The Chautauquas hired some 6,000 college boys to work as ticket takers and do the common labor of setting up and taking down tents, etc. The Chautauquas prided themselves on offering their audiences a refined experience, which still could run the range from philosophical lectures and Shakespeare to comedy monologues and humorous sketches. Dariel Fitzkee was never one to suffer fools gladly. He had a relatively short fuse and could lose that patience the Chautauquas favored so. Note that the letter says that there have been complaints "a time or two." That's our boy!

The nature of Chautauqua musical acts was that they might be called upon to play for an hour or more. When this was the case, the musical numbers were at times relieved by a novelty act, just to give the audience a change of pace. Dariel could provide for that with his magic; and, while we do not know the extent to which he performed



BART CHALK TALK SYSTEM

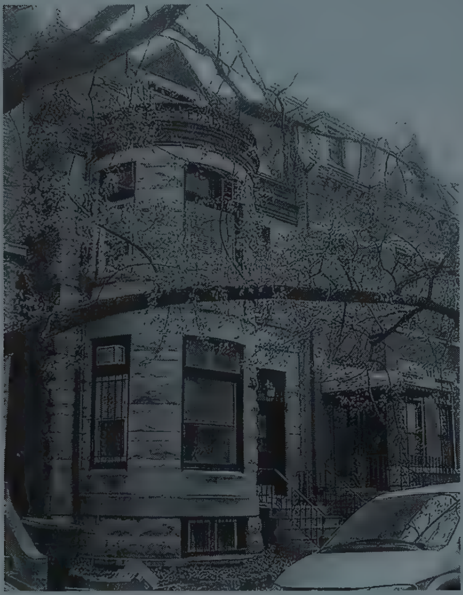
THE KAISER'S PASSPORT.

Adapted from Ancient to Modern for Story-Telling Entertainment or Chalk Talk.

Arranged by Bart.

For Story Telling Entertainment

For Chalk Talk Presentation.

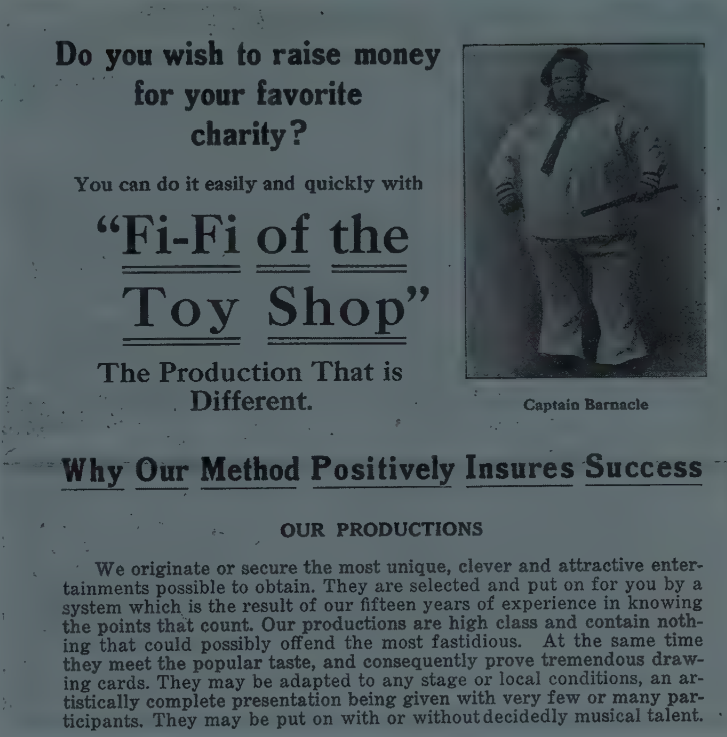


These apartments were next door to the Fitzkee's apartment at 424 St. James Place in Chicago.

while on the Circuit, we suspect he was ready if needed. We also know that he explored novelty presentations offered by "The Bart System of Basic Stunts," which was advertised as "a symposium of all kinds of chalk talk programs and entertainment numbers touching on politics, women–Lovely Women, Illustrated Story Telling, Smoke and Rag Pictures, etc." Some Chautauqua performers created whole acts out of these stunts; others, perhaps Dariel, used one or two as short emcee pieces. As the leader of "The Marine Band," Dariel would have announced the numbers and quite probably chatted with the audience between numbers, possibly performing a chalk talk or a paper tearing stunt. Chalk Talks were short presentations that the performer illustrated by sketching cartoon figures on a portable chalk board. Usually the presentation began by the performer printing a few letters on the board, often in a haphazard manner – for example an "S," an "A" and an "M." Then, as the performer gave his talk, in this case about the good old United States, he would quickly tie the letters together with a few lines ending with a caricature of Uncle Sam. The paper tear in his files was dated from the end of World War I, so would still have been timely, even in 1921, and centered around The Kaiser trying to get into heaven. The "Kaiser," who was the equivalent of the president or king in Germany, was synonymous with German aggression during the war. St. Peter asked the Kaiser for a passport, and the Kaiser (acted out by the performer, of course) took a piece of paper, folded it, and tore out several sections. When he opened it, he showed a paper cross, which he handed to St. Peter. "What are those other papers?" asked St. Peter. Told they were just scraps, St. Peter placed them around the paper cross and showed the Kaiser that the torn papers now spelled the word "HELL." "There's your passport," said St. Peter. "Take it and get there as fast as you can." Such was humor in 1921! Did Dariel ever perform this for a Chautauqua audience? Perhaps. We'd like to think so.

Near the end of the Chautauqua season in August, H. L. Bland wrote to all of the companies that were on the road representing him. "We have come to the most critical stage in the work at this time because there is now grave danger that you know the program too well and will give it in a most blasé manner.... [Keep in mind] that here is a group of people that have been wanting to hear us, waiting to hear us [and] give them only your best." Then he wrote, "To date not one single complaint has reached me on any individual in any of my companies. That's fine." Fine, but not quite accurate, as we have already seen. He finished up, "...Keep sweet, render service, play the game. Don't make the same mistake twice and if things go wrong, don't alibi. Always helpfully, H. L. Bland.

H. L. Bland recognized that it was only human nature for acts to begin to drag near the end of the season, and Dariel felt an added urgency to complete his contract and to return to Chicago. He and Marcia had spent less than a month together in the four months since their marriage, and most of that, if not all, was in May! He was anxious to see the most beautiful girl in the world, and she was equally anxious to be with the man who made her feel that way. In September, Dariel returned to Chicago and put his Chautauqua career behind him. However, Marcia was still in Dallas. The practical matter was that she had a good, steady income and Dariel had no income; she would stay in Dallas until he had a good job. Dariel found an apartment at 424 St. James Place, less than two miles north of the Chicago business district. St. James Place is an exceptionally charming, quiet street about four blocks east of De Paul University and a half-block from Lincoln Park and the lake. Four twenty four is no longer standing, only recently replaced with new construction, but the residences adjacent to that address and across the street date from the years that Marcia and Dariel lived there and give a good impression of what it was like then.



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Captain Barnacle

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OUR PRODUCTIONS

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The John B. Rogers Producing Company specialized in helping organizations produce fund-raising theatricals.

Marriage, and Marcia's practical nature, changed Dariel's plans about a career in show business. He had worked one season as a musician in a supporting role, and he had worked a season as the leader and manager of a musical group. He had acted the lead in plays and was reasonably good at that, but for both his music and his acting we sense he recognized that neither direction would provide either great success or satisfaction. But it was Dariel's nature that every experience was filed away, both in his head and on paper, with the idea of serving him at some time in the future. Ambitious and always looking for opportunity, Dariel turned to the business side of show business.

We know that between September 1921 and March 1923 Dariel worked for two different companies, one a company that assisted amateur groups to produce fund raising theatricals and the other a theatrical supply company. It is likely that he first went to work for either the John B. Rogers Producing Company or the Marlatt-Cargill Company. Either way, it was probably his good friend Bill Marlatt who got him the job. We believe that Bill Marlatt had likely worked for the John B. Rogers Producing Company at one time. Then, at some point in late 1921, he joined forces with a man named Cargill to form the Marlatt-Cargill Producing Company, offering services similar to those of the John B. Rogers Company. The Marlatt-Cargill newsletters prepared for their employees suggest a separate company, but the folksy nature of the writing hints that perhaps Marlatt was still working for John B. Rogers and that he and Cargill simply wrote the newsletter for their friends and associates in the company. Maybe they were in charge of the Chicago office of the John B. Rogers Company. Twenty years later, in the biographical information that appeared at the time of the publication of *Showmanship for Magicians*, we read that Dariel "...wrote and directed amateur theatrical productions for one of the largest producers of this type of entertainment for fund raising purposes." Rogers was the largest producer of that type of entertainment, and their productions ran the length and breadth of the nation. Our best guess is that sometime during his stay in Chicago, Dariel became one of their "expert producers who assumes entire charge of the rehearsals and staging of [the] production." The John B. Rogers Producing Company boasted that they enjoyed the unique record of "never yet having failed to make money for the auspicing society."

Did he write as well as direct amateur productions? If not, he likely aspired to do so, since that was his nature. We do have a three-page script titled "Burlesque Tragedy to be used as an encore" for "On the Stage Song." This could have been used as an encore for one of the Marlatt-Cargill productions, or, less likely, for a John B. Rogers production, or it could date from "The Marine Band" days. Remembering that this was 1922 and was meant to be a burlesque, here are a few lines from that script:

SARAH. (Very slowly, looking around.) "Oh, I *wonder* where Harold can be. It is now nine o'clock. He promised to meet me at *twelve* and he's not here yet." (Heavy music.) (Enter Villain.)

VILLAIN. (Aside.) "Ah! Me fair beauty is *alone*. Now to win her by *fair* means or *fow–owl.*"

SARAH. "Forgive me, oh, *forgive* me."

VILLAIN. "Yes, but what have you *done?*"

SARAH. "NOTHING!"

VILLAIN. "Nothing? CURSES. Then I never *Can* forgive you." ... "Have you the *papers*."

SARAH. "No."

VILLAIN. "Where are they?"

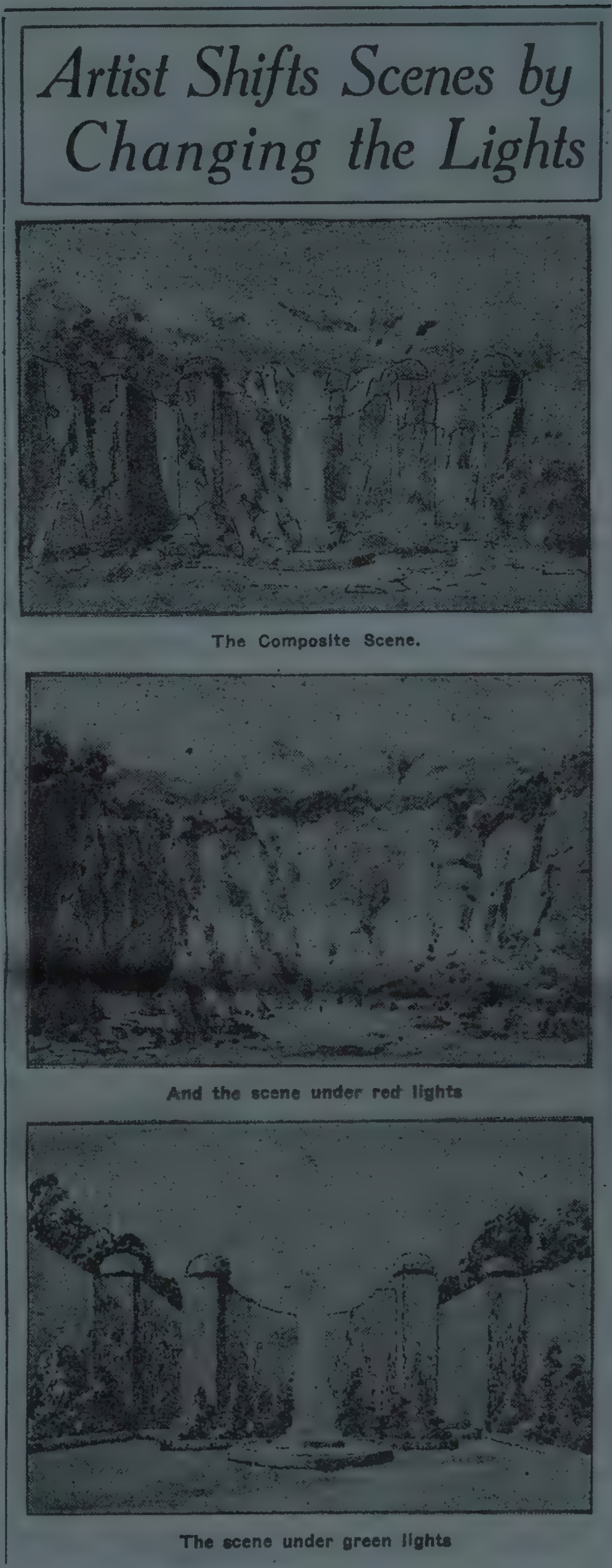
SARAH. "In the blacksmith's shop."

VILLAIN. "In the *blacksmith's* shop? YE GODS! Then they are *forged!*"

That's enough. You get the idea.

Whether working for John. B. Rogers or Marlatt-Cargill, Dariel was still in show business. But now, he did not have to be away from Marcia for months at a time while on a circuit, especially important since she was back from Dallas and dancing occasionally in Chicago. His work for the producing company was short lived, however, and by early 1922 Dariel had turned to his abilities as an artist and found employment in stage design. The 1922 *Chicago Directory*, which provided the St. James address, lists Dariel's employment as "Designer." But what did that mean? We find out on page 3 of the May 16, 1922, issue of the *Chicago Herald and Examiner* under the headline: "Artist Shifts Scenes by Changing the Lights." The article tells of Dariel's efforts to "revolutionize" stage backdrops using the laws of physics. "Dariel Fitzkee, a young Chicago stage artist has ... succeeded in painting two scenes on one curtain, making possible an instantaneous change of scenery, simply by changing the colors of the lights on the stage. He asserts that three, even four scenes may be painted on the same curtain, keyed one into the other. All this is possible, he explains, by synchronizing the lights on the curtain with its designs. 'It is a well-known physical fact that certain colors under certain lights are invisible,' said Mr. Fitzkee, 'I simply applied this principle and worked out the designs accordingly.'" The article goes on to explain how the device would work and shows photographs of a single backdrop under three different sets of lights. "Under a green light there appears to be a formal garden, with a fountain playing in the center. Under a red light the garden disappears and, instead, the scene depicts a rocky gorge, mountains towering into the background, and a waterfall tumbling into a natural pool at the base of a cliff. Under ordinary light the two scenes intermingle. "Mr. Fitzkee says that chemistry and physics taught him the possibilities of light and color, and that psychology taught him that black appears blacker when alongside white, and not so black when alongside gray. In art school he learned the relations of one color to the other." The article concludes by saying that negotiations had already been entered into with a New York producer of revues for a set to be used the following season. While we have no formal record of those negotiations and do not know if they bore fruit, we have no doubt that Dariel did pitch his concept to New York producers. He was never shy about promoting himself or his ideas.

It is clear that Dariel's multiple scene concept created interest in the theater world. Two months later in an article titled "Advanced Scenic Art in the Theater," which we found in the Lincoln Nebraska *Sunday State Journal*, but which was copyrighted by *The New York Herald* (that is, the article was syndicated around the country), we find the following: "Revolutionary changes in scenic equipment of the theater, as presaged by the extraordinary experiments of Dariel Fitzkee in



Artist Shifts Scenes by Changing the Lights

The Composite Scene.

And the scene under red lights

The scene under green lights

Dariel's "scientific" stage scenes attracted considerable attention.

Chicago...." About a third of the article explains Dariel's methods, the same as those outlined above. The other two-thirds explains attempts by several other stage designers in New York and Paris to use synchronized colored lights, none of which proved very satisfactory. The article suggests that it would be possible to use a single backdrop "for every scenic change necessary in any sort of play or musical production. He [meaning Dariel] can paint on one drop half-a-dozen different sets, which when seen in the ordinary light of day look like a cubist's jumble of crudities, but when illuminated with lights of certain colors reveal artistic interiors or decorative art scenes." However, later in the article we read, "So far Mr. Fitzkee has succeeded in painting two scenes on one curtain." In other words, in Dariel's mind, and as he no doubt suggested to the New York producers, it was logical that the science that enabled him to paint two sets on one curtain could easily be used to paint as many as six sets on one curtain, as suggested in the article. Science and logic – while his natural inclination in these areas of study had no doubt been evident during his school years, this is the first time we see it emerge in so ambitious a project and in so creative a fashion. And in this project we see the subtle beginnings of a question that will bloom into controversy regarding his most famous work – can creativity be formulated.

Both of these newspaper articles point out that the value in Dariel's concept, were it to be successful, lay in the ability of theatrical productions to transport scenery in much less that half the space currently required and that the cost savings would be such that productions currently limited to long-term runs on Broadway would be financially able to take shows, especially musical comedies, to one, two, three, and four night stands almost anywhere.

We can now tie several loose ends together. The *Chicago Herald and Examiner* article stated that the curtain Dariel had designed was on exhibit at the Acme Scenic Studios, 36 W. Randolph St., Chicago. That is, in May of 1922, Dariel was working as a stage designer for Acme and had been there at least long enough to develop the "Miracle Scene." In the October 1922 issue of *Exhibitor's Herald*, a trade magazine for theatrical supplies, is an article titled "Lights Transform Scene on Curtain, New Drop by Acme Studio Has Big Possibilities for Presentation." The article explains the process, as in the other articles, but also states that the drop has been acquired by the Allen Theatre, Vancouver, the Miller Theatre, Wichita, Kansas, and by Roth & Partington, San Francisco, and that "the entire series will be distributed on a city rights basis as fast as they are completed." Dariel is credited with being the originator. At first reading the "Miracle Scene," as it was called, seemed to be a bit of a pipe dream; but the *Exhibitor's Herald* article proves that Dariel's concept was practical. The article was reprinted on the back of a flyer that Acme Studios sent to their mailing list. "Thousands have seen it, have admired its beauty, have stood up and applauded it, and these selfsame thousands have gone away mystified." The Acme copy on the flyer stated, "When men of the caliber of those whose opinions have been passed so favorably on the 'Miracle Scene' [*Billboard*, the *Chicago Herald-Examiner* and the *Exhibitor's World*] see fit to devote the time to investigate it and praise it, it means that the effect is a decided innovation." One of the intended uses of the "Miracle Scene" was as a special effect, in which the one scene would gradually change to the second scene before the eyes of the audience as the lights gradually changed. Magic in the theater!

Throughout 1922 and into 1923 Dariel and Marcia enjoyed an active social life in the city, especially with their show-business friends. But as the young couple neared their second wedding anniversary in March of 1923, Dariel and Marcia decided to leave Chicago, a city they would always claim to be their favorite, and to move west. Marcia's family was there; and, even though her mother had never been supportive, there was still a strong bond between the two of them, as well as between Marcia and her cousins, aunts, and uncles. She was homesick. As for Dariel, he was always game for a new adventure and probably welcomed the change. His experience as a designer and producer/director convinced him that with his love for the theater and his logical, entrepreneurial mind, he had a future in this business. He also knew that he would never be satisfied working for someone else. As always, the experience was catalogued and filed. West they went.

Chapter 6

San Francisco, American Studios and The Magician's Den

Marcia's mother had married Henry Greer in the years since Marcia had left San Francisco. The marriage was clearly a good one and much of the negativity that had plagued Marcia's relationship with her mother was gone. Fred was a respected attorney and served as San Rafael City Attorney, District Attorney for three terms, and Marin County Superintendent of Schools for several years. He was a good man and came to love Marcia as his own, and Marcia came to love him as the father she never really had known. But Marcia's mother was not happy with her daughter's marriage. She had an early aversion to his "foreign" name, and thought him "probably some eastern European." Certainly he was not suitable to be joined to the vaunted "Adair Heritage." To her generation anyone not readily identifiable as being Anglo-Saxon was suspect. Perhaps, too, she considered Dariel little more than a farm boy, considering his upbringing in rural Illinois. In any case, when the couple arrived in San Rafael, Marcia's mother was visiting in La Jolla, in southern California. The young couple stayed with Marcia's stepfather while finding a place to live in San Francisco and work.

San Rafael
San Anselmo
San Francisco Bay
Pacific Ocean
Oakland
San Francisco

When Marcia's mother returned, she was surprised to find her son-in-law to be fair complexioned with brown hair. Still, she was not too sure about this cocky, small town fellow from the corn belt. But Dariel could charm the birds out of trees if he wanted to; and he set about letting Marcia's mother know in no uncertain terms that he was here to stay and turned her into a lifelong admirer.

Dariel had a strong portfolio. He had experience as both an actor and a musician; he understood set design and construction and had been taught the rudiments of carpentry by his father. He understood the science of stage lighting and his ideas had been considered by Broadway producers. While he was not famous, his name was known in theatrical circles; and everyone in the theatrical world knew the John B. Rogers Production Company name. In 1923, there were several theatrical supply firms in San Francisco, and we suspect Dariel had no trouble finding employment. Our best guess is that he went to work for Flagg Studios, a Los Angeles based firm that had an office in San Francisco. The couple soon found an apartment on Dubose Avenue and moved to the big city.

We do not know much about their life and work during these years. We assume that

Dariel and Marcia in San Rafael, 1923.

Marcia was working also, as it would be another five years before their daughter would be born; but we are not certain. Her daughter believes she only worked later, when there was an occasional call for drapery sewing at the studio. They were always an outgoing, fun couple, who enjoyed hosting parties; and we suspect that many of the friendships that would last throughout the twenties, thirties, and beyond were forged at this time.

In Dariel's formative years in LaSalle, Illinois, he became acquainted with the institution of Freemasonry. Those were years when most men joined one or another fraternal order – the Elks, the Moose, the Lions – there were many such organizations. The Masonic Lodge building in LaSalle, built around 1900, is an impressive building, and Dariel was no doubt aware of it. We do not know, but it is possible that his father or one or another of his uncles was a member.

The Masonic Order would have appealed to Dariel on several counts. The Masons claim to be perhaps the oldest fraternal organization in recorded history, which by itself carries a certain prestige, not unlike belonging to The Society of American Magicians, which has been in continuous operation longer than any other magical society in the world. Admittedly, Dariel's interest in religion was slight, making Freemasonry appealing instead. His father's ancestors had been Lutheran, but his father was not active in church. On the other hand, his mother was a devout Catholic, and in the oldest record book at the Catholic Church in Annawan, Illinois, is the baptismal record for Dariel, dated August 21, 1898, listing Richard Linehan, his mother's father, as Godfather. Throughout his youth, Dariel attended mass with her. He remembered that church attendance was rigorous; and once he chewed communion, although he had been warned not to. He thought for sure that he would be punished by God and was surprised when nothing happened. Such are the small things that begin to shake faith, and he began to fall away. Early religious experience left behind often creates a void, perhaps not even recognized as such, and it is not surprising that Dariel found a substitute for the religion of his youth. Freemasonry espouses the moral doctrines of brotherly love, relief and truth, temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice. It emphasizes the duty of man to be curious about the world, to develop his intellect and skill, to be just, to follow precepts of conscience and exercise self-control. These would have appealed to Dariel's own intellect. While Freemasonry requires a belief in God, it does so without the need for dogma or creed or theology. This, too, would have appealed to Dariel.

Dariel would have been drawn to the ceremonies of Freemasonry, through which the system of morality and brotherhood based upon Sacred Laws are taught. Masons progress through a series of steps, or degrees, each of which is conferred only after a period of study, accompanied by witnessing rituals that illustrate the principles related to the degrees. Members are encouraged to witness the rituals as frequently as possible in order to become fully aware of the nature of each degree. As Dariel rose through the ranks, becoming knowledgeable of the laws, he would likely have participated as an instructor; and, as many of the rituals are demonstrated by enacting an event, they would have appealed to his love of theater.

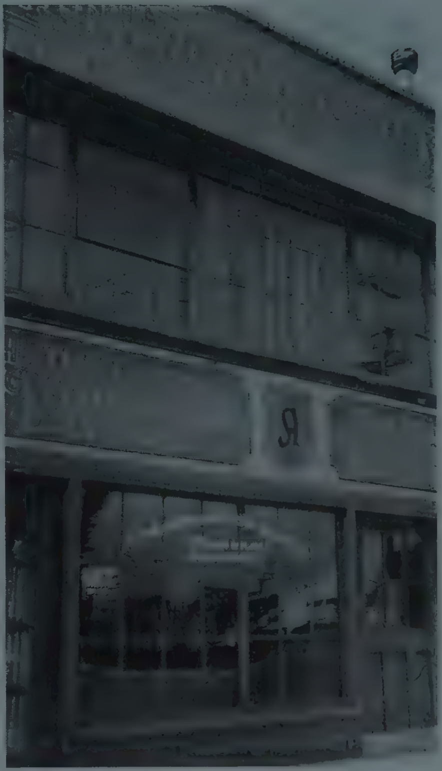
It takes many years of dedication to rise through the degrees, and to achieve the rank of a 32nd degree mason is a true accomplishment. Dariel did achieve that position, one short of the highest possible, the 33rd degree ranking, seldom achieved. There are several different branches of Freemasonry, and the one Dariel joined in San Francisco is referred to as the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry. They have become universally respected and appreciated for their good works, especially Scottish Rite Hospitals for Crippled Children.

Marcia became active in the women's auxiliary of the Scottish Rite, and both she and Dariel proudly wore Scottish Rite rings all their lives. The sense of fellowship among the Rite spans the world, and members pledge to come to the aid of their brothers and sisters in time of need. The ring is a symbol of this fellowship, and many is the time that strangers have stepped forward to assist others when the ring has been noticed. Dariel, who was a 32nd-Degree Mason, received his 50-year membership pin a few months before his death in 1977.

Marcia had been raised a Presbyterian, and had an uncle who was an Episcopal priest. She was introduced to the Christian Science faith by Fanchon and Marco and practiced that religion as a young woman. A basic tenant of the Christian Science faith is that a person may be healed of physical and psychological illnesses through the aid of a "practitioner," who, through deep study of the Bible and the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy, the discoverer of Christian Science, and through living the Christian ethic in daily life, are able to use the power of Christ to cleanse others. As in all religions, not everyone who claims authority uses it well. In the early sixties Marcia went to one practitioner whom some family members actually considered to be insane. The experience totally destroyed Marcia's faith in practitioners, although she continued to subscribe to various Christian Science Journals and faithfully to read the lesson every day. However, organized religion did not play an important part in either of their lives.

We find no references to Dariel's interest in magic in the mid-1920s. Both in Chicago and San Francisco he would have had opportunities to attend performances by some of magic's greatest artists, including Houdini, Thurston, Nikola, and others. Arthur Buckley, referred to as "the Australian Card Expert," and his wife were living in Chicago while Dariel and Marcia were there and it is possible that was when Dariel first met them, establishing an acquaintanceship that would lead to a joint project a few years later. But at the same time, Buckley enjoyed California and frequently played throughout the state in the late 1920s; they might have met then. However, Dariel does not then or later mention an actual meeting.

Remembering that Dariel was a skilled sleight-of-hand artist with cards and billiard balls, and possessed the dedication and commitment that is required to achieve those skills, it is very unlikely that he was completely inactive in magic during those years. Once "the magic bug" has bitten, it has often been said, there is no cure. There were two magic organizations in the San Francisco Bay area in the 1920s. In 1923, when the Fitzkees moved to San Francisco, The Golden Gate Assembly #2 of The Society of American Magicians met regularly at the St. Francis Hotel in the city. In 1927 a second magic club was established across the bay in Oakland. It is possible that Dariel was acquainted with members of those clubs and may well have frequented a magic shop in the city. However, both clubs filed monthly activity reports for publication in *The Sphinx*, a magazine for magicians, and Dariel's name does not appear there until early 1928. The fact that the first mention of him was unrelated to either of the magic clubs affirms our belief that he had been familiar with *The Sphinx* magazine for years and probably had continued his subscription in order to keep up with what was happening in magic. But if so, he would have read about San Francisco magic activities, including those of the Golden Gate Assembly, and we wonder why he apparently did not become involved with them until 1929. However, Dariel was a very logical person. He undoubtedly set goals for himself and would have pursued them with a dogged determination. Our guess is that he maintained his skills through practice and, as we shall see, certainly kept abreast of magical literature; but primarily he devoted his time to the theatrical equipment supply business.



The
ARCHITECT
and
ENGINEER

AUGUST 1926

Top, American Studios at 1060 Folsom Street, San Francisco. Throughout his life it was important to Dariel to share his knowledge and expertise with others. His series on designing theater stages ran from August, 1926 to early 1927 in The Architect and Engineer.

We know he took his primary occupation seriously, for a series of four articles written by him on "Ideas for Theater Stages" appeared in *Architect & Engineer*, beginning in August 1926, and ran through the first few months of 1927. The series of articles was intended to enlighten the reader on the technical side of the stage and covers such details as the proper kind of wood to use for a stage floor; optimum heights for stages; lines of sight; preferred cable sizes for counterweights and other devices; standard for the installation of asbestos curtains; the coefficients of friction for various materials used for sloats, that part of stage equipment upon which travels draper curtains. Dariel presented himself as a technical engineer (how else would his articles have been accepted by *Architect & Engineer*) and the articles do suggest his mastery of the field. Dariel could not resist the opportunity to embellish his image, however. "Only the other day I had occasion to call upon one of the most prominent architects on the Pacific Coast – in fact he is nationally known," he wrote in the August 26 issue. "I volunteered my services in connection with a project he is now designing, for such technical advice as he might find of value. He assured me that he was an old theatrical architect and that I could not possibly have any suggestions to make that would improve his work. He was even impolite enough to let me understand that he considered my call an intrusion. The part of the whole thing that amused me at the time – and it does yet – is this: ...I had viewed a school stage of his design a few days previously, and had noted several glaring faults which I had hoped to tactfully correct....

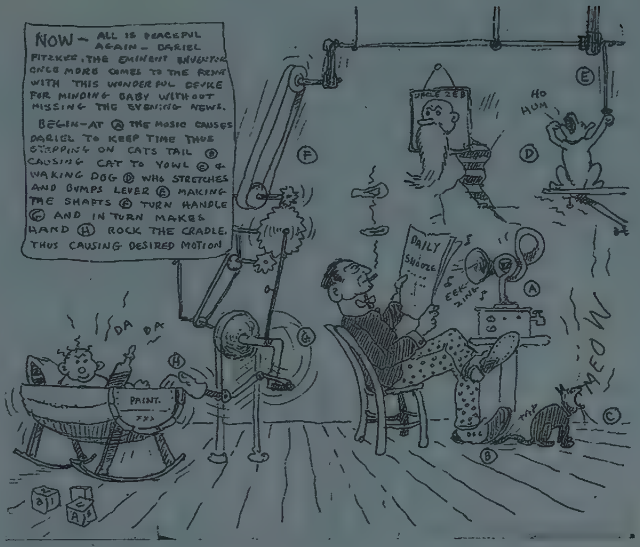
Brother Dick joined Dariel in 1928. The brothers were always very close. The 34th Street flat.

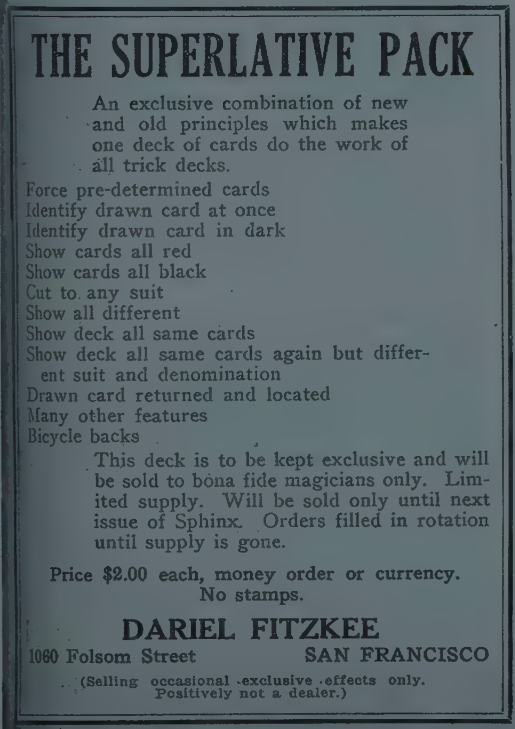
He palpably knew little of actual value." Dariel could not resist the opportunity to represent himself as an expert; but although he might exaggerate his credentials, he backed his claims with real knowledge.

In these articles he references Flagg Studios, which is the basis of our assumption that he was working for them from 1923 to 1925. In late 1925, with A.A. Sheurman, he decided to start his own theater supply company and founded American Studios at 1060 Folsom Street in San Francisco. At first they handled only the smallest of drapery and scenic installations, but in the September 1927 *Pacific Coast Independent Exhibitor* newsletter, we read, "In the history of rapid growth, perhaps there is not another industrial establishment in San Francisco which can record greater progress in the same period of time than this same American Scenic Studios. The two-person staff grew to twenty-five expert artists, drapery workers, design artists and salesmen, and was augmented as circumstances demanded."

From his family back in LaSalle, Dariel learned that his younger brother, Dick, was beginning to struggle at finding his own way in the world. He had been only eleven years old when their mother died. Dariel, the older brother, had left home for all intents and purposes and could provide no guidance, and Pike, eight years older than Dick, was married and busy trying to establish his own life. Growing up without a mother's influence makes it easy to slide into unproductive habits and practices. Dariel fully remembered the pledge made to his dying mother and sent Dick a train ticket and an offer to join him at American Studios. Dick jumped at the chance to join his brother. We suspect that Dariel, the track and football star, the Chautauqua performer, the successful business man with a beautiful wife, was his young brother's hero. He accepted the offer and moved in with Dariel and Marcia, who were now living in a nice flat at 627 34th Street, about a block south of Geary Avenue, just north of Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, about five miles from American Studios. Getting back and forth to work would have been an easy matter with public transportation.

By 1928, American Studios was a full-service theatrical supply company, offering theatrical scenery, stage settings, drapes, decorations, stage equipment, counterweight systems, sloats (wood slats used for backdrops), and hardware. They had a 30 x 90 foot paint shop, an 80 x 100 foot carpenter shop, and a large drapery room. Theatrical drapery was a specialty, and thousands of dollars worth of priceless silks, satins, and velvets were carried in stock. Their clients included the new National Theater in Marysville and the new Alhambra Theater in Sacramento, the state capitol. This was a job of great prominence, for the Alhambra became the most imposing and best equipped of Sacramento's several theatres. Other well known places where their work was shown included Pantages Theatres and the beautiful Rose Ball Room of Oakland, and their work was classed as one of the most gorgeous scenic and drapery effects on the Pacific Coast.


NOW – ALL IS PEACEFUL AGAIN – DARIEL FITZKEE, THE EMINENT INVENTOR ONCE MORE COMES TO THE FRONT WITH THIS WONDERFUL DEVICE FOR MINDING BABY WITHOUT MISSING THE EVENING NEWS.
BEGIN – AT Ⓐ THE MUSIC CAUSES DARIEL TO KEEP TIME THUS STEPPING ON CATS TAIL Ⓑ CAUSING CAT TO YOWL Ⓒ & WAKING DOG Ⓓ WHO STRETCHES AND BUMPS LEVER Ⓔ MAKING THE SHAFTS Ⓕ TURN HANDLE Ⓖ AND IN TURN MAKES HAND Ⓗ ROCK THE CRADLE. THUS CAUSING DESIRED MOTION
UNCLE ZEB
HO HUM
DAILY SNOOZE
DA DA
PAINT
MEOW



THE SUPERLATIVE PACK

An exclusive combination of new and old principles which makes one deck of cards do the work of all trick decks.

Force pre-determined cards
Identify drawn card at once
Identify drawn card in dark
Show cards all red
Show cards all black
Cut to any suit
Show all different
Show deck all same cards
Show deck all same cards again but different suit and denomination
Drawn card returned and located
Many other features
Bicycle backs

This deck is to be kept exclusive and will be sold to bona fide magicians only. Limited supply. Will be sold only until next issue of Sphinx. Orders filled in rotation until supply is gone.

Price $2.00 each, money order or currency. No stamps.

DARIEL FITZKEE
1060 Folsom Street SAN FRANCISCO
(Selling occasional exclusive effects only. Positively not a dealer.)

Above, Gus Schneider's "Rube Goldberg" style cartoon in celebration of Marcia's birth.
Below, Dariel's first advertised trick was The Superlative Pack.

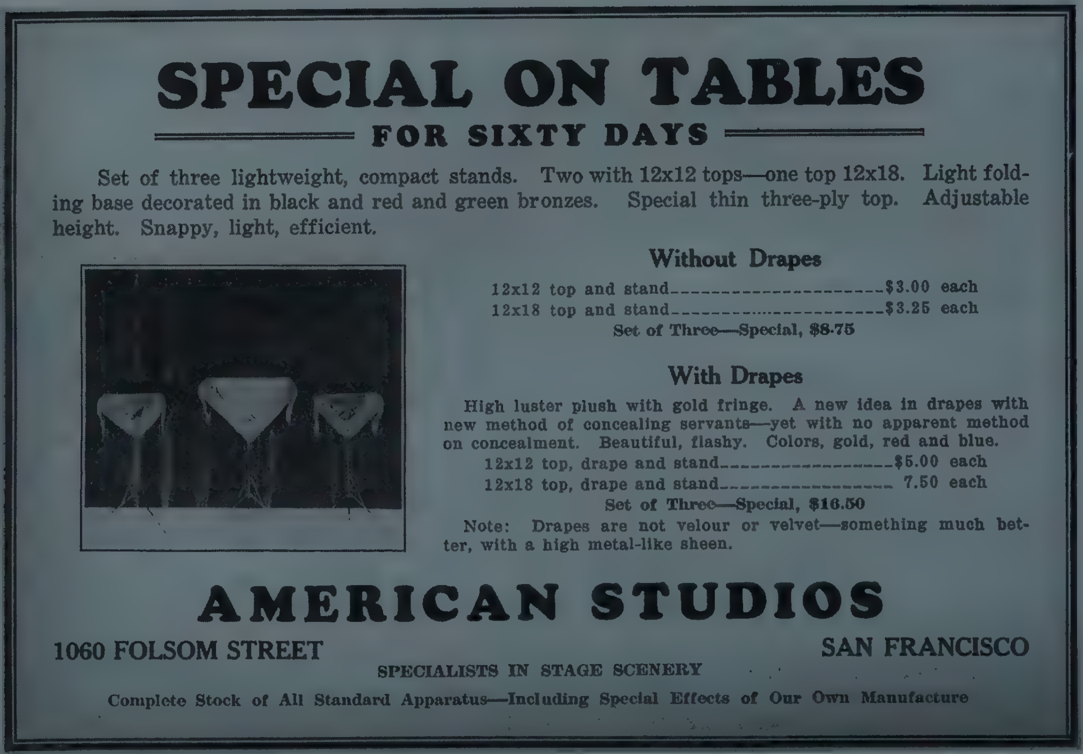
It is likely that Dick began as an all-purpose employee, and we know that Marcia worked as a seamstress in the company from time to time as well, sewing curtains and drapes. Dariel and Marcia's daughter, Marcia Dobbs, relates that her mother told stories about the good times they all had. The Fitzkee boys shared a great sense of fun, no doubt inherited from their parents, for they all told stories of the fun they had growing up in Annawan and LaSalle; and there was much laughter in their lives. Marcia became pregnant, and family, friends, and employees awaited the blessed day in great anticipation. On February 21, 1928, the time came for Marcia to deliver. She and her cousin, Merritt Lewis's wife Bernadine (Muriel's sister-in-law), a great friend to Marcia, sent Dariel off to American Studios. He was probably just as happy to be dismissed. When Dick heard the news of the birth of a healthy baby girl, Marcia Adair Fitzkee, he organized a parade of friends and American Studios employees to tramp down Folsom Street in celebration, much to Dariel's consternation. But that was the way Dick was; and that was the way Dariel was. In addition to the parade, the event was celebrated by a special cartoon drawn by Gus Schneider, a good friend and one of the scenic artists at the studio. Gus would later have a successful career with the Disney animation studios.

American Studios gave Dariel an opportunity to pursue his interest in magic more vigorously than in the past. In the March 1928 *Sphinx* appears a quarter-page ad for "The Superlative Pack, an exclusive combination of new and old principles which makes one deck of cards do the work of all trick decks." That is quite a claim, for there were literally dozens of trick decks of cards available in 1928. We have not seen "The Superlative Pack" or its instruction sheet, nor do we know anyone who has, so we cannot describe this "remarkable" deck, but it is clearly a variation of the Svengali deck. Also, it may have been stripped in several ways (allowing the handler to cut to any suit, find the card in the dark, show the deck to be all the same card, and force a card, among other things). Price $2.00, for sale by Dariel Fitzkee, 1060 Folsom Street, San Francisco (the address of American Studios). The ad closes with this curious statement: "Selling occasional exclusive

THE MAGICIAN'S DEN
AMERICAN STUDIOS
1060 Folsom St. San Francisco
THE MAGICIAN'S DEN
AMERICAN STUDIOS
1060 FOLSOM SAN FRANCISCO
SPECIAL LIST
MAGICAL APPARATUS
AMERICAN STUDIOS
1060 FOLSOM ST SAN FRANCISCO
New De Luxe Magic No. 8
A Special line of SUPER MAGIC all put up in Superior Manner—Elaborate ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTIONS.
ENTIRELY DIFFERENT!
DIFFERENT ENTIRELY!
THE HINDU ROPE
THIS IS THE FINAL SIMPLIFICATION OF THE ROPE CUTTING AND RESTORING EFFECT
1060 FOLSOM ST.
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

effects only. Positively not a dealer." It appeared only that one time, and Dariel does not reappear in the pages of *The Sphinx* until nearly a year later, in February 1929. This time the ad is under the American Studios name, on Folsom Street. "Painted Sets, Draperies, Throws, Cabinets, Special Illusion and Production Works." The half-page ad specifically offers "High class drops for the performer – regardless of his class of work," and shows a photograph of a backdrop. "The mise en scène and appointment of your act," the ad claims, "is as important as the apparatus used," and "The sateen is not the usual thin, cheap stuff – but genuine theatrical stage heavy grade." And in a box near the bottom of the ad: "Complete stock of apparatus comprising items from Petrie-Lewis, Sherms, Blackstone, Chicago Magic Co., our own special effects. Adding new lines constantly." That is, with this ad Dariel Fitzkee, through American Studios, did establish himself as a dealer. The next month, the American Studios ad advertised a special on tables – lightweight, compact stands with drapes and servantes. The ad once again noted that American Studios also offered "special effects of our own manufacture."

Magician's Den catalogs from late 1929 and early 1930 and an early American Studios ad that appeared in The Sphinx magazine in March, 1929.



SPECIAL ON TABLES

FOR SIXTY DAYS

Set of three lightweight, compact stands. Two with 12x12 tops—one top 12x18. Light folding base decorated in black and red and green bronzes. Special thin three-ply top. Adjustable height. Snappy, light, efficient.

Without Drapes

12x12 top and stand——————$3.00 each
12x18 top and stand——————$3.25 each
Set of Three—Special, $8.75

With Drapes

High luster plush with gold fringe. A new idea in drapes with new method of concealing servants—yet with no apparent method on concealment. Beautiful, flashy. Colors, gold, red and blue.

12x12 top, drape and stand——————$5.00 each
12x18 top, drape and stand—————— 7.50 each
Set of Three—Special, $16.50

Note: Drapes are not velour or velvet—something much better, with a high metal-like sheen.

AMERICAN STUDIOS

1060 FOLSOM STREET SAN FRANCISCO

SPECIALISTS IN STAGE SCENERY

Complete Stock of All Standard Apparatus—Including Special Effects of Our Own Manufacture

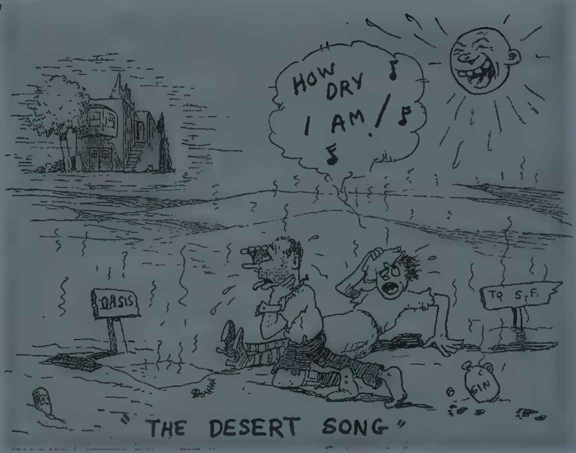
We wonder why his name, Dariel Fitzkee, does not appear in either of these ads. He probably felt that an ad from a professional theatrical supplies studio carried more legitimacy .

By this time, local magicians were dropping by American Studios to take a look at what Dariel had for sale in what he called "The Magician's Den." Magicians love magic shops, and we can only assume that Dariel had some out-of-the-way location in the building where magic paraphernalia was hidden away out of sight of the non-magician clients. Magic shops in those days were very different from those of recent years, where anyone off the street can stop by and ask to see a trick, gaze at the colorful apparatus lining the walls, and for a few dollars buy a video that tips secrets that magicians hold dear. Prior to the 1970s, there were almost no lavish window displays designed to attract the curious. The most famous magic shops were invariably secluded on some second floor; and, unless you were a magician, you would not find them inviting. Even inside, the proprietor would carefully inspect the customer to determine whether to be friendly or usher him on his way. Secrets were sacred and carefully guarded. Not only was the secret told only when the trick was sold, some proprietors would take the customer to a back room to explain how the trick worked so that no one standing around in the showroom could see. Of course today even the modern magic shop is passing into history, for anyone, magician or not, can see magic demonstrated on myriad internet magic shop websites and, unfortunately, explained on "You Tube" and similar sites by people who do not respect the magician's creed.

But if you qualified, Dariel was sure to find time to talk magic with you, show you some fine Petrie-Lewis nickel-plated apparatus, or perhaps demonstrate an item from one of his own manuscripts. It would not take long to discover that Dariel Fitzkee was a remarkable person, both knowledgeable of and skillful in magic and confident but pleasant. It would not take long for someone to invite Dariel to attend the monthly meeting of The Society of American Magicians held at the St. Francis. Dariel would have known about the Society for years, from what he had read in *The Sphinx*, but he had never joined. If he was going to sell magic, either his own or that of others, he needed to belong. In the April 1929 *Sphinx* under "Notes from Golden Gate Assembly No. 2, S.A.M. in San Francisco," we read, "...in addition to some clever magic shown by some of our Compeers [members equal in standing with one another], we had two candidates for the mysteries – Mr. Bradley, a banker, and Mr. Fitzke (sic), who is now interested in selling some magic. Both men are good members and enjoy the mystic art." To be a candidate for the mysteries was to apply for membership. Ever since its inception The Society of American Magicians has required that all applicants be approved by the local members of an assembly (as the clubs are known) and then pass through a formal initiation, which was a combination of fun and serious ritual, for magicians took their art and traditions seriously. The founders of the society who created the full-form initiation in 1902 were also members of the Masonic Order, so it is not surprising to find similarities in the two ceremonies. Dariel joined The Society of American Magicians with relish, receiving the membership number 1635.

In that same April issue of *The Sphinx*, in an article titled "Magic in San Francisco," a local magician named Farrance gave Dariel's magic shop a plug: "Local Magis will have an opportunity to part with their coin at 'THE MAGICIAN'S DEN,' a new Magic shop that has recently been opened at AMERICAN STUDIOS...." During 1929 and 1930, Dariel published four catalogs advertising magical wares. The first, a "Special List" of "Magical Apparatus" offered by American Studios, was a mimeographed booklet of several hand-let-

The house on 43rd Avenue that was the scene of many happy times. About a quarter mile from the Pacific Ocean, it was surrounded by sand dunes, prompting the Gus Schneider cartoon.



tered pages with an art paper cover, stapled at the top, and illustrated by Dariel. Two others followed, both with the headline "The Magician's Den" and cartoon art by Gus Schneider on the art paper covers. The mimeographed pages contained artwork and lettering by both Dariel and Gus. A fourth was a stock catalog (*New DeLuxe Catalog No. 8*) prepared by some wholesaler with "American Studios" rubber-stamped in the bottom right-hand corner. It was general practice, in addition to offering select items from well known manufacturers of magical equipment, like Petrie-Lewis or Thayer, to offer small magic tricks common throughout the nation that the magic shop owner could order from a mail-order company. In mid-1929, then, we find American Studios doing well in the world of theatrical supplies, "The Magician's Den" was coming into its own as a magic shop, and Dariel Fitzkee was poised to become an influential force in the West Coast Magic scene and perhaps beyond. His was a classic success story. Born in a small town in the Midwest, he pulled himself up by his bootstraps and achieved success at everything he pursued. He married the most beautiful woman in the world and had a baby girl who was following her mother's lead. He and his family had just moved from their 34th Street flat to a charming new home at 1563 43rd Avenue, a few blocks from the Pacific, out in the sand dunes, as Gus Schneider's cartoon would attest, where they could literally hear the roar of lions at the San Francisco Zoo. It seemed that all the stars were aligned in his favor. What he did not count on was October 29, 1929, the stock market crash, and the coming Great Depression.

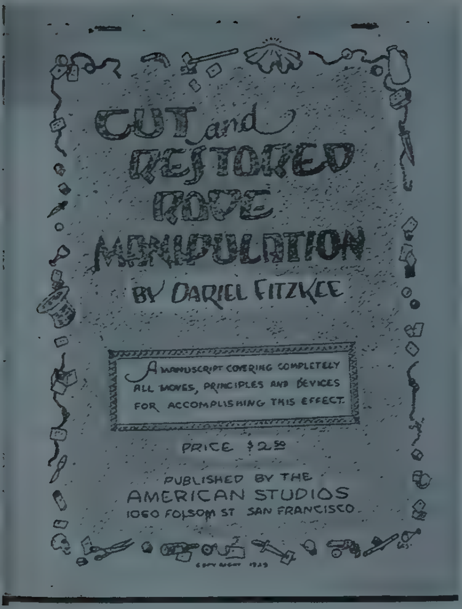
Chapter 7

Magic Books and The Great Depression

Magic club scribes are notorious for not keeping proper minutes of club meetings, and there are many gaps in the records of The Golden Gate Assembly No. 2 as reported in *The Sphinx*. But even though the reports are infrequent at times, we are fortunate that Dariel's growth in magic over the next decade can be fairly accurately evaluated, not only from assembly reports but also from occasional comments made in other sections of the magazine. Dariel was also a member of the Oakland Magic Circle, an independent magic club across the bay from San Francisco. That club was actually much better at sending activity reports to *The Sphinx*, and Dariel is mentioned in many of those. It is noteworthy that, even though *The Sphinx* contracted with The Society of American Magicians to publish assembly reports, the magazine was representative of magic as a whole and printed reports from many independent magic clubs as well as information about The International Brotherhood of Magicians (I.B.M.) even though that organization had its own magazine called *The Linking Ring*.

The I.B.M. was the brainchild of a young Canadian magician and ventriloquist, Len Vintus, who saw the need for an organization for all magicians, professional and amateur alike, who could correspond through a magazine. With the help of Buffalo, New York's Gene Gordon, the organization was founded in 1922, with Vintus as president and editor of the newsletter, which quickly became a magazine. The S.A.M. had very strict requirements for membership and often turned down applicants who lived far away from the few assemblies that existed at the time and was not considered friendly to those just beginning in magic. The I.B.M. attracted many members who lived away from the major cities and became a sort of working man's magic club, as evidenced by the union-sounding name "International Brotherhood of Magicians." For years the S.A.M. projected an elitist image, perhaps a natural development considering its position in magic history and the prestige of many of its members. But the I.B.M. found a large market among those just starting out in magic and those who simply enjoyed performing for friends and family or perhaps the local church social. At the same time, it had appeal for those professionals who possessed a broader view of what a magic club should be than what most S.A.M. members thought. Werner "Dorny" Dornfield, a highly popular Chicago magician who would later be National President of the S.A.M. became I.B.M. member no. 4.

Dariel was certainly familiar with the I.B.M. through *The Sphinx*. Although San Francisco would not establish a local club, called a "ring," until 1946, Dariel joined the I.B.M. in June 1929. This was at least in part so that he could advertise in *The Linking Ring*; but, in addition to his ads, we find his name mentioned in that magazine frequently, usually in conjunction with Oakland Magic Circle activities. Later in the decade southern California attorney and S.A.M. member William Larsen founded the independent magazine *Genii The Conjurors' Magazine*. This magazine placed an emphasis on west coast magic (as dif-



CUT and RESTORED ROPE MANIPULATION

BY DARIEL FITZKEE

A MANUSCRIPT COVERING COMPLETELY ALL MOVES, PRINCIPLES AND DEVICES FOR ACCOMPLISHING THIS EFFECT.

PRICE $2.50

PUBLISHED BY THE
AMERICAN STUDIOS
1060 FOLSOM ST SAN FRANCISCO

COPYRIGHT 1929

Dariel's first published mansuscript was Cut and Restored Rope Manipulation.

ferentiated from *The Sphinx*, with its emphasis on east coast magic), and from it we learn much about Dariel's progress in magic.

After joining the Society, Dariel wasted no time getting active in the Golden Gate Assembly. The next report we find in *The Sphinx* is not until September 1929, where Dariel is mentioned no less than four times. It was announced that he will be the "educational speaker" at the October meeting and that he was one of eight members who performed that night. At the mid-September meeting, he "entertained us with some beautiful billiard ball work." Billiard ball manipulation, which included the multiplying billiard balls (where one ball miraculously becomes two, then three, then four and then reduces in number back to one), was always one of Dariel's favorite effects because of the skill required. We are fortunate to have film of him performing his billiard ball routine. Finally, there is mention of the release of his first manuscript: "Have you purchased your copy of *Cut and Restored Rope Manipulation* by Dariel Fitzkee? If not, you don't know what you have missed. It is worth the $2.50 asked and plenty more."

In his regular column in *The Sphinx*, New Jersey's William Frazee wrote a review of the manuscript, including: "...It is a mimeographed book, but very clearly printed and the drawings give a good idea how to perform the various rope cutting effects. The author frankly confesses that he did not invent any one of the various effects, merely compiled them. The various inventors of rope tricks are making an awful howl about this fellow exposing their methods. Well, I never invented anything or wrote a book so that lets me out." New York City's Max Holden, a world-famous magic dealer and columnist, wrote that the new book of "Rope Manipulation ...is a book that every magician should have as here you are given every angle of ropes and the different methods and twists." Dariel must have been delighted that his first book received such praise. A full-page American Studios ad for the book appeared in that same September issue of *The Sphinx*.

The book was also reviewed by Charles Brush in *The Linking Ring* for August 1929: "The describing of other peoples' tricks has been quite common but here even the originators may feel mollified after perusing the author's explanation. What Darwin has done to monkeys, Dariel has accomplished with the trick of wholing a cut rope.... Care is taken to place credit throughout... He has our felicitations on the style and appearance of his initial venture."

Frazee's comment that "the various inventors of rope tricks are making an awful howl about this fellow exposing their methods" is very significant. The accepted ethics of magic frowns on piracy. You do not take a presentation from another performer's act and put it into your own without permission, and you do not sell another person's trick without permission, including putting their method into your own publication. Some magicians resented the fact that Dariel had done just that. In the introduction to *Cut and Restored Rope Manipulation*, which Dariel titles "an explanation," he anticipates this objection. He writes, "To avoid criticism for apparently appropriating the properties of other brother magicians... I believe the basic idea behind this book – the inter-relation of all methods to the two old basic methods – as completely worked out, and here published for the first time, is my own idea. All of the rope effects are fundamentally these two methods with variations. Even the variations have been borrowed from inventor to inventor with the result that the true ownership of some of these is in doubt." He goes on to suggest that by explaining the variations in a clear, progressive manner, he is doing something for the greater good of magic. He also states that he has credited variations to the man he believes responsible, but also that it was not possible to get permission to use the variation. He then concludes that since the public press has exposed the cut-and-restored principle, his book will give the magician the ability to perform the old effect in new ways that will fool those who think they know the secret.

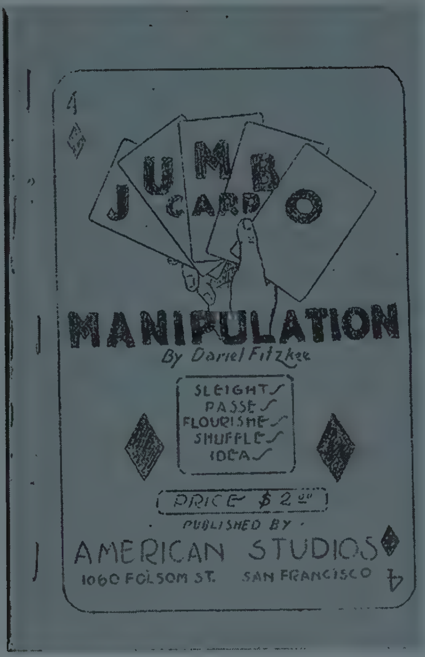
And so we face the dilemma of the letter of the law versus the spirit of the law. Did he use other people's material without permission? Yes. Was it for the greater good? Quite probably yes, and it is significant that neither Frazee nor Holden accuse him of wrongdoing. An analysis of the manuscript shows that it is built on old methods from Hoffman's *Modern Magic* and *Later Magic* and tricks by Harry Kellar and Karl Germaine as well as on gimmicked ropes of the snap variety used by Harlan Tarbell (and exposed in *Popular Science*) and the glued variety. From there, Dariel shares some of the more intriguing concepts contained in published routines by Burling Hull, U. F. Grant, Wright and Larsen, and others. In each of these latter cases, however, the greater bulk of the routine is not explained, and the reader is encouraged, both by the text and by the natural desire to know more about those clever routines resulting from how Dariel handles them in his own text, to seek out the original. Our conclusion is that there is very little fault to find in Dariel's manuscript. Indeed, it encompasses a new concept in magical literature at that point in magic history, that of bringing together several sources in the analysis of a single effect. This is emphasized in the October issue of *The Sphinx* by that magazine's book reviewer, Milton Bridges, who judges the concept "unique" and writes that Dariel is to be lauded for clearly giving credit to others for the material in the book.

The manuscript illustrates for the first time two important characteristics about Dariel for which he would become universally recognized. The first is that he is one of the most knowledgeable men in magic. His references to Hoffman, Kellar, Germaine, Tarbell, Hull, Grant, Wright and Larsen, and others indicate a dazzling command of the literature and reinforces our belief that he maintained a strong interest in magic from his mid-teens throughout most of his life and, secondly that he would become known not for the invention of new tricks (in spite of *The Trick Brain*) but rather for the improvement of standard or new tricks by the creative combination of methods and by presentation.

The suggestion of piracy deserves a further word, for it will come up from time to time in reference to Dariel's writings. It is our belief that the inventor of a new trick or variation should enjoy exclusive use for a reasonable period of time until or unless it is released to the magic public. What is "reasonable" is difficult to determine, of course. But we also believe there comes a time when it is appropriate for others to improve on an original concept and to release it as a new and improved trick. (Although magicians will point out that a lot of good tricks have been ruined by improvements!) This issue has always been, and continues to be, one of the most controversial issues in magic.

Dariel continues to appear in Golden Gate Assembly No. 2 and Oakland Magic Circle reports throughout 1929, giving "an interesting talk on original magic and demonstrating a number of new moves and clever wrinkles," and "Compeer Fitzkee had us agape with wonderment as he manipulated the jumbo cards, presented Booth's Baffling Block and The Devil's Sticks." Jumbo card manipulation was one of Dariel's specialties. In December he released his second book, *Jumbo Card Manipulation*, advertised in *The Sphinx* with a full-page ad.

In that December issue, U. F. Grant, a magic dealer in New York City at the time and a prolific inventor of magic tricks, wrote in a somewhat rambling way, "What a modern audience requires is new tricks with a surprise finish and you can dress up an old trick up so it will appear new and surprising, so we will have to be content with dressing up old tricks, because a few such as a Mr. Fitzkee say, there is nothing new or original in most Magic, especially rope magic for the simple reason he had to have some excuse for stealing the other fellow's ideas to cash in on. And he was not even original in putting out a manuscript of stolen material as that sort of thing has been done before. Now he puts out another manuscript of Card Tricks containing original material but material that is original with others, not him, as I have used most all of them for at least three years, but these sort of pirates never last long, they pass out of the picture within a few months. Now that's off my chest we will go along with some magic."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MANIPULATION
By Dariel Fitzkee
SLEIGHTS
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SHUFFLES
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Dariel's second manuscript, Jumbo Card Manipulation, was very successful.

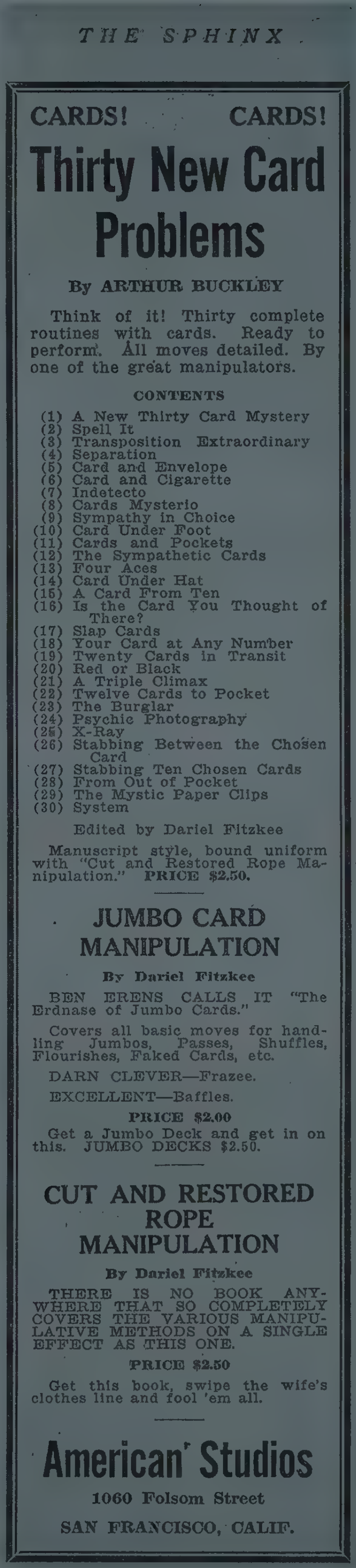
In the introduction to his new book, *Jumbo Card Manipulation*, Dariel refers to the controversy that his rope book "kicked up." He declines to comment on the veracity of the complaints but rather simply mentions that "to date *Cut and Restored Rope Manipulation* is the season's magical best seller." Of course that may simply mean as recorded by his own company, American Studios. But it is interesting that in the March issue of *The Sphinx*, T. Page Wright and William Larsen, whose "The L. W. Mysteries" was perhaps the most popular column in *The Sphinx*, dedicated that month's column to rope tricks. They wrote, "We ourselves have brought forth rope tricks. One, the Zenith, we thought worthy of sale. Mr. Dariel Fitzkee, in his excellent work on cut and restored effects, seconds the thought. We take this opportunity of thanking Mr. Fitzkee for his kind words anent our efforts in this regard." It is interesting that Larsen and Wright did not feel Dariel guilty of any wrongdoing. On the contrary, they referred to his book as "excellent." Why should U. F. Grant, whose work is cited in Dariel's book, and whose method is explained in no more detail than that of Larsen and Wright, be so upset? Perhaps it is because in his rope book Dariel wrote: "I never have been able to understand why Holden picked 'Grant's Rope Trick'... as one of the five best tricks of 1927. Even if it had been Grant's sleight-of-hand method, brought out for sale in late 1928, I still can't understand it.... In their second method for the 'Zenith Rope Trick,' I believe Wright and Larsen have evolved the best of all sleight-of-hand methods...." Well, perhaps we *can* understand why Grant was miffed.

Jumbo Card Manipulation was different from the rope book. The majority of the book simply explained how to handle jumbo cards, those cards approximately 5 x 7 inches in size, including how to shuffle them, fan them, maintain breaks, perform several common sleights with them, including two methods of doing the pass, one original to Dariel, and how to vanish a card screened by fanning the cards. He also explains how to apply the stripper and corner short concept to jumbo cards for controlling a selected card and discussed springing the cards and performing a few other flourishes. All of these were simply the application of moves common to regular-size cards to jumbo cards. He does explain Jack Miller's back palm, using Miller's own previously published illustrations from an earlier issue of *The Sphinx.* Jack Miller, a New York City performer and magic dealer, was known as "The Giant Card King" for his jumbo card manipulation act first performed in 1923. Dariel did get permission to explain the move and to use the original illustrations. He also explains a Tarbell move and a Tom Bowyer routine, with Bowyer's permission.

In his final comments, Dariel again recognizes the controversy regarding originality. "I make no apology for what might be found herein. He who accuses me of plagiarism in this book will tread on dynamite. Every sleight herein has evolved as the result of good, hard work. Nowhere have I been enabled to find the slightest information to help me."

Frazee anticipated a continuation of the controversy, as well. In his January *Sphinx* column he wrote, "I think that a lot of the boys will be peeved..." but also "...in my humble opinion it is a darn clever book...and I am sure it will sell as fast as the first one," which validates Dariel's claim that the rope book was a best seller. Frazee also stated that he wondered why Jack Miller had never written a book about his jumbo card work. Then, in his February column, we find these cryptic notes: "Jumbo... card... arguments... who used Jumbo cards first... Clinton Burgess... Bob Elroy... Arthur Lloyd... Jack Miller... many more claim them... again the figure with the pad and pencil... and another book is issued... Jumbo Card Manipulation... and another chance passed up by the inventors of card effects... they argue... Fitzkee complies." I wish we knew to what he complied. We may never know, but it seems clear that Frazee respected Dariel for *not* passing up the chance to write the book.

In response to U. F. Grant's caustic remarks, Dariel wrote a letter to the *Sphinx* editor, Dr. A.M. Wilson. " I have just noticed an item in the December issue of *The Sphinx* signed by U. F. Grant in which he makes the following statement in connection with my Jumbo Card book: 'Now he (referring to me) puts out another manuscript of card tricks containing original material but material that is original with others, not him, as I have used most all of them for at least three years.' Please be advised that Mr. Grant had never seen the book on jumbo cards when he wrote that, as due to delays in the art work, the first books were not shipped from here until December 12th.... If Grant's statement is true he must have seen the book...before the Decem-



THE SPHINX

CARDS! CARDS!

Thirty New Card Problems

By ARTHUR BUCKLEY

Think of it! Thirty complete routines with cards. Ready to perform. All moves detailed. By one of the great manipulators.

CONTENTS

(1) A New Thirty Card Mystery
(2) Spell It
(3) Transposition Extraordinary
(4) Separation
(5) Card and Envelope
(6) Card and Cigarette
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(29) The Mystic Paper Clips
(30) System

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Covers all basic moves for handling Jumbos, Passes, Shuffles, Flourishes, Faked Cards, etc.

DARN CLEVER—Frazee.

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Get this book, swipe the wife's clothes line and fool 'em all.

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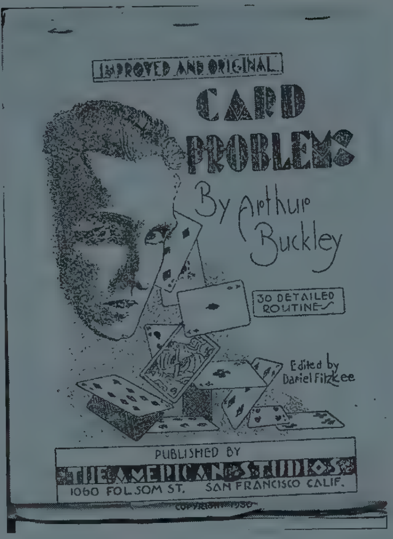
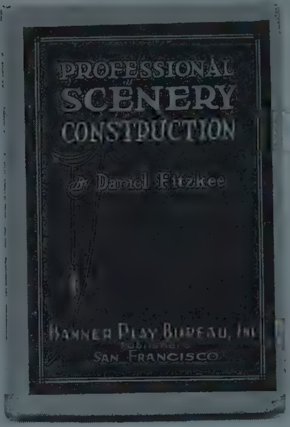




Dariel published Professional Scenery Construction, actually written for the amateur market, and edited and published a fine manuscript featuring the card work of the Australian magician, Arthur Buckley.

ber *Sphinx* went to press. I am sorry, but I shall have to ask for a retraction–or proof that will overrule the postal receipts. Otherwise, Grant's statement can be nothing but a malicious falsehood, and should be corrected as such...." Although *The Sphinx* editor, Dr. Wilson, invited Grant to respond, Grant apparently elected not to, as no further comment on the matter appeared in *The Sphinx*. It is fun to note that Grant used the same statement, "I have used most all of them for at least three years" in referring to the routines in both Dariel's Rope book and his Jumbo Card book.

Meanwhile, Dariel continued to increase his involvement with the Golden Gate Assembly No. 2. In the club's annual contest he placed second with "a very neat giant card routine" and was elected First Vice-President of the club.

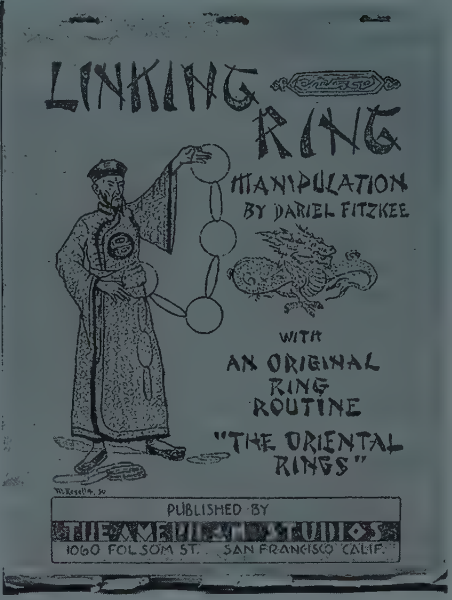
It is the nature of magic clubs that they need champions, people who love magic so much that they are willing to dedicate a significant amount of time and talent to helping the club improve. Without champions, magic clubs languish and sometimes die. Although the Golden Gate Assembly was active, reports in *The Sphinx* were sporadic at best. The occasional reports we do find indicate that Dariel became the club's champion.

In the closing pages of *Jumbo Card Manipulation*, he wrote, "What is there in magic to attract me? I have had my taste of professional experience. I did not like it, although I have been in the theatrical business for years. Now, as an amateur, I find it utterly fascinating. No one, I am sure, spends more time in study and research than myself. What for? You try to answer that. I can't." That is a very significant statement. It defines Dariel Fitzkee's interest in magic in the 1930s. It was an obsession and Marcia must have been a very understanding wife.

More and more we find Dariel's name associated with the assembly and he could be counted on to participate in every meeting. He wrote the obituary for his friend and compeer Blue Williams, who died of cancer at age 28, leaving a widow and daughter, and a month later the obituary for another member and fellow Mason Dr. George Compton.

The champion of the Oakland Magic Circle was Lloyd Jones, a semi-professional magician and a pharmacist by profession. (Semi-professional simply means that, although Jones often performed for pay, doing magic was not his primary source of income.) Both men were relatively young; Jones was age 24 and Dariel, 32. Between the efforts of the two of them, magic thrived in the Bay area, and, largely at the instigation of the two of them, a contest was organized between the two clubs. Each club held its own eliminations to determine who would represent each club in sleight-of-hand, old effects, and any effect, either new or old. The first "Semi-Annual Contest and Entertainment" was scheduled for March 1930, with the second scheduled for six months later. An audience of 700 attended the March show. Dariel represented The Golden Gate Assembly in the third category with a cut-and-restored rope effect and a comedy Hindoo act featuring a disappearance of the performer from an Oriental rug. Judges awarded the silver trophy to the assembly with 191 points in their favor to 165 scored by the Oakland Magic Circle. There is no record of a contest in September, but a "second annual contest" did take place in 1931, so it appears they simply decided that they were doing well to put together one contest event per year.

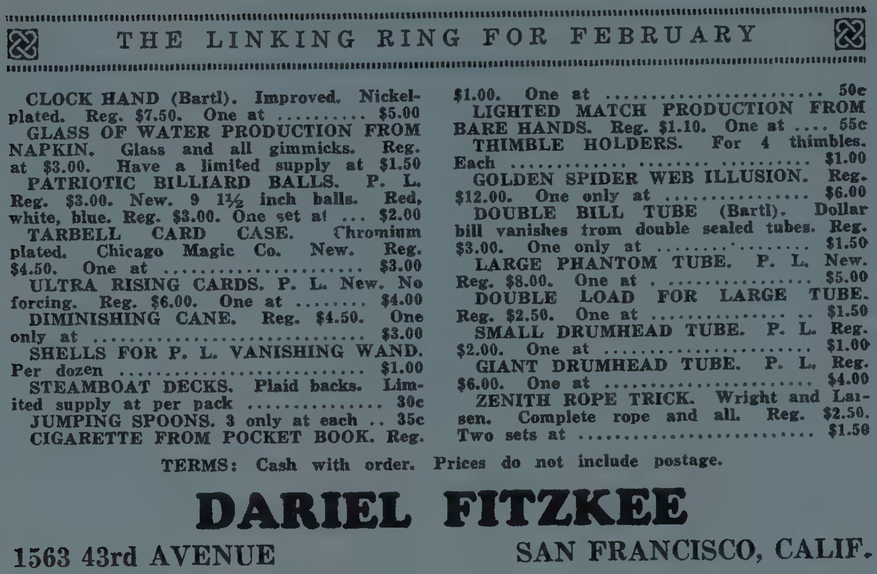
We do not know the financial status of American Studios as a theatrical supplies company at this time but assume it would be some months before the impact of the Depression would affect service companies like Dariel's. In 1930, the Banner Play Bureau, Inc., San Francisco publishers, released Dariel's *Professional Scenery Construction*, a 65-page book that Dariel wrote "solely by a desire to contribute my share in an effort to improve the construction of amateur-manufactured scenery." As such, the book is a primer for schools and community drama organizations and teaches such basic techniques as fitting joints, clout nailing, toggles, stretching cloth over frames, etc., all used in building simple sets and backdrops. It was an excellent book for its purpose. The Banner Play Bureau was a primary source of plays and theatrical books for the amateur market, not unlike the John B. Rogers Production Company. Dariel dedicated this book "To my father, whose patient answers to many questions in boyhood gave me my first teachings in construction." This acknowledgment of his father's influence must have pleased Howard, and we have no reason to believe other than that father and children always remained close.



Linking Ring Manipulation, like his earlier Cut and Restored Rope Manipulation, caused considerable controversy. Was it ethical to publish parts of other magician's creations?

In the April 1930 *Sphinx*, Frazee reviewed Dariel's latest book, Arthur Buckley's *Improved and Original Card Problems*, which Dariel edited. "Fitzkee went and did it again and this time he outdid himself as it is the best piece of work he has turned out so far. He gives thirty routines with cards – the best effects of Buckley. They are described in a clear way and will be of great help to the man who makes cards a feature as many effects never published before appear in this work." A one-third page American Studios ad appears in this issue advertising the card problem book and Dariel's first two books, and a full page ad appears in the April 1930 *The Linking Ring*. Then, in the July *Sphinx*, Frazee mentions Dariel's fourth book, *Linking Ring Manipulation* "...the latest work issued by Dariel Fitzkee. This is one of the most up-to-date works on that much neglected subject. He gives his best moves with the rings, not a lot of fancy figures, but the real method of manipulation including new and improved moves with and without the key ring. With the aid of this book you will be able to give the Chinese Rings a new lease on life." In the July issue, Milton Bridges, the *Sphinx* book reviewer, says the book presents basic principles and many new ideas which should be of great service and increase the confidence of those who have been afraid of "the rings."

In his introduction to the Buckley book, Dariel states that the first ten of the "improved and original card problems" had been published in two small pamphlets of five effects each in 1924. The balance of the book consisted of material that a Mr. Zado of the Golden Gate Assembly had obtained from Buckley just before Buckley's return to Australia. "I have seen fit to include the previously published ten 'problems' in order to make the manuscript complete." However, the manuscript is not complete, for Dariel suggests that the many standard sleights required for the effects can be found in Erdnase, Downs



THE LINKING RING FOR FEBRUARY

CLOCK HAND (Bartl). Improved. Nickel-plated. Reg. $7.50. One at $5.00
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LARGE PHANTOM TUBE. P. L. New. Reg. $8.00. One at $5.00
DOUBLE LOAD FOR LARGE TUBE. Reg. $2.50. One at $1.50
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ZENITH ROPE TRICK. Wright and Larsen. Complete rope and all. Reg. $2.50. Two sets at $1.50

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DARIEL FITZKEE

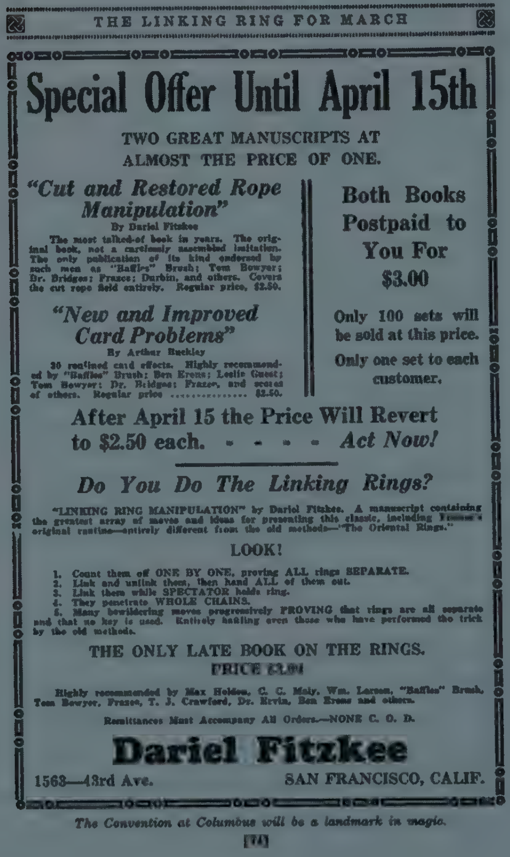
1563 43rd AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

and Hoffman, and that Buckley's own sleights are explained in Buckley's previous publications. That is, what you get in the card problem book are routines, stating the sleights used in each, with the necessity of finding instructions for the sleights elsewhere. It is not clear if Dariel obtained permission from Arthur Buckley to reprint the first ten effects that had seen print before.

The Linking Ring book is similar in style to the Rope book in that Dariel brought together a selection of ring moves and subtleties from previously published sources, some old – "a condition demanded by a complete manuscript" – some new, "The reason for this manuscript's being." Beginning with the concealment and steal of the key ring, the book covers counting, linking, and switching techniques. He describes, with credit, two subtleties from Namreh's "Lincoln Rings" and two moves by Loyd Enoch. The rest, however, are given without credit. He does not describe the various figures, primarily because he prefers "to treat the ring trick as a straight mystery of matter penetrating matter." In his own presentation, he does not do any of the figures at all. He recommends Namreh's routine for the figures.

It would be five years before Dariel would write another book for the magic fraternity. In that interval much would happen.

In the October 1930 *Sphinx,* we find the first trick that Dariel ever published in a magic magazine. Titled "Here's How," it is a



THE LINKING RING FOR MARCH

Special Offer Until April 15th

TWO GREAT MANUSCRIPTS AT
ALMOST THE PRICE OF ONE.

"Cut and Restored Rope Manipulation"

By Dariel Fitzkee

The most talked-of book in years. The original book, not a carelessly assembled imitation. The only publication of its kind endorsed by such men as "Baffles" Brush; Tom Bowyer; Dr. Bridges; Frazee; Durbin, and others. Covers the cut rope field entirely. Regular price, $2.50.

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30 routined card effects. Highly recommended by "Baffles" Brush; Ben Erens; Leslie Guest; Tom Bowyer; Dr. Bridges; Frazee, and scores of others. Regular price .... $2.50.

Both Books Postpaid to You For $3.00

Only 100 sets will be sold at this price.

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Do You Do The Linking Rings?

"LINKING RING MANIPULATION" by Dariel Fitzkee. A manuscript containing the greatest array of moves and ideas for presenting this classic, including [illegible] original routine—entirely different from the old methods—"The Oriental Rings."

LOOK!

1. Count them off ONE BY ONE, proving ALL rings SEPARATE.
2. Link and unlink them, then hand ALL of them out.
3. Link them while SPECTATOR holds ring.
4. They penetrate WHOLE CHAINS.
5. Many bewildering moves progressively PROVING that rings are all separate and that no key is used. Entirely baffling even those who have performed the trick by the old methods.

THE ONLY LATE BOOK ON THE RINGS.

PRICE [illegible]

Highly recommended by Max Holden, C. C. Maly, Wm. Larsen, "Baffles" Brush, Tom Bowyer, Frazee, T. J. Crawford, Dr. Ervin, Ben Erens and others.

Remittances Must Accompany All Orders.—NONE C. O. D.

Dariel Fitzkee

1563—43rd Ave.
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

The Convention at Columbus will be a landmark in magic.

[74]

simple routine in which a coin wrapped in the center of one handkerchief is magically transported to a knot tied in a second handkerchief. This is simply a combination of two well-known effects and is still one more example of Dariel's creativity using other people's effects.

In the April 1930 issues of both *The Sphinx* and *The Linking Ring*, we find the last American Studios ads to ever appear anywhere. There follows a gap of ten months before we find an odd half-page ad in the February 1931 issue of *The Linking Ring*. Eighteen items were offered, including a Bartl Clock Hand, regularly $7.50, for $5.00; a P&L Ultra Card Rise, regularly $6.00, for $4.00; Steamboat Decks; Thimble Holders; the Zenith Rope Trick; etc., available from Dariel Fitzkee, 1563 43rd Avenue, San Francisco. That is, Dariel was selling from his home on 43rd Avenue. American Studios had closed and Dariel was liquidating his inventory. Dariel always maintained that the advent of neighborhood movie theaters had a lot to do with the downturn of business for stage equipment suppliers. Front curtains were used, but scenery was not necessary – just a movie screen. As far as Dariel was concerned, the movie business, not the Depression, put American Studios out of business. In the March 1931 *Linking Ring*, a full-page ad offered the Rope book and the Card Problem book, both postpaid for $3.00 – a $2.00 discount.

Financial reverses did not dampen Dariel's enthusiasm for magic, however. In January, 1931, he was elected president of the Golden Gate Assembly, and, in the few reports that do appear in print, we find him to be a reliable participant, performing at the annual banquet and at the regular meetings. "Dariel Fitzkee closed the show with a cut rope trick and a routine with Ridiculous Ruppert, the Mind-Reading Dog. They seemed to like Ruppert." While Dariel was skilled at sleight of hand, he had a good sense of humor and enjoyed having fun with the club with items like Ruppert, a hand puppet.

In reading the magic magazines of the 1930s, it is difficult to recognize that the country was immersed in the Great Depression. Very little is written about the impact it had on magic and magicians, and what clues that exist are often subtle. For example, the Parent Assembly (New York City) of The Society of American Magicians submitted a proposal to the government to include magicians under the Civil Works Administration (CWA), a government-sponsored program that created work for four million people in construction, social work and the teaching of literacy. The proposal suggested that magicians be hired to take entertainment to the many projects sponsored by the government. It was not funded. Also, a code of ethics was proposed that stipulated that amateur magicians not be hired to perform for such shows when professional magicians were available. The reasoning behind this was that professional magicians were having a hard time getting work.

It is almost impossible for us today to understand how difficult times were in the 1930s when as much as one-third of the work force was unemployed, and a much higher percentage in some locations and in some fields of work. The stock market crash in October of 1929 was only the catalyst for the depression, which really came about when banks failed as a result of unsecured loans to millions of speculators. Early in 1930, 4 million workers were unemployed. That number rose to 8 million by mid-1931 and 13.5 million by the end of 1931. From the beginning of 1930 to the end of 1932, 85,000 businesses failed, 9 million savings accounts were lost, and 500,000 homeowners were turned out of their homes. Government programs in the 1930s brought considerable relief to the country, and as many as one-third of the nation's unemployed were hired by those programs. By 1936, national unemployment dropped to 13 percent, but the nation would not emerge from the Great Depression until the outbeak of World War II.

Chapter 8

The Opera House Curtain and The Society of American Magicians

We believe that American Studios, and with it The Magician's Den, was forced to close its doors by 1931, and Dariel sought work elsewhere. Perhaps he was out of work for a while and he might have even been trying to sell some of his personal collection. He was fortunate to find work with the Stage Equipment Studios in San Francisco, Fred E. Turner, manager, as did several of the American Studios employees. It is possible that Stage Equipment Studios purchased American Studios, or at least their inventory, which would help explain this. After considerable success in establishing his own business with his partner Sheurman it must have been very difficult for Dariel to work for another.

Dariel continued to be active in both the Golden Gate Assembly and the Oakland Magic Circle, of which he was also a member, although reports from those two clubs in both *The Sphinx* and *The Linking Ring* are scarce. The assembly initiated a contest among its own members with competitions every six months. Dariel won the first contest by performing his version of Dr. Ervin's Cut and Restored Rope routine. Those familiar with cut-and-restored rope routines will find it interesting to know that this routine was a bit unusual in that two spectators held Dariel's wrists and two others held the rope while the cutting and restoring took place.

In May 1931, the Golden Gate Assembly and the Oakland Magic Circle hosted The Great Raymond along with several San Francisco show business personalities at a special dinner program at the Hotel Bellevue. Dariel, as president of the assembly, and Lloyd Jones, president of the circle, both made speeches. Jimmy Muir, writing in the June *Sphinx*, said, "San Francisco Magic Society is surely coming to life under the guidance of Dariel Fitzkee, the new president...." Later that month the assembly won the second annual trophy contest with the Oakland Magic Circle. The report includes a cute gag worked up by Fitzkee and Jones: "Muir [the emcee] introduced President Lloyd Jones and President Fitzkee, who made short speeches. Then Fitzkee returned Jones's watch to him and Jones did likewise." Later in the report we read, "As part of the contest Dariel performed an original illusion where he defied the gods with the result that he was turned into a Skeleton." The Golden Gate Assembly won the contest by a score of 760 to 758, "...after which the judges were asked 'How they got that way,' which caused a little commotion," no doubt in good fun. We do not read more in *The Sphinx* until October 1931, when we learn that a "Fitzkee Wand Trophy," was awarded for the evening's best example of showmanship. This is of special interest because it is the first occasion where we see Dariel's interest in singling out showmanship as a significant aspect of performance. On another occasion around this time, Dariel assigned one of the assembly members to give a talk at the next meeting on misdirection, another topic that was of special interest to him.

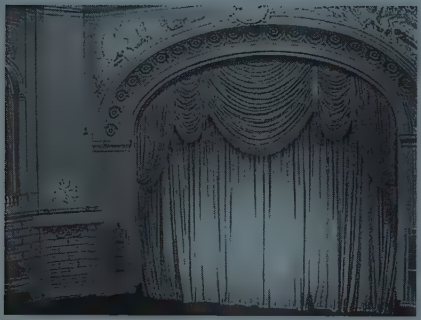
Dariel in the early 1930s.

The un-named reporter adds, "Golden Gate Assembly No. 2, under the capable guidance of our president, Dariel Fitzkee, is steadily growing and we expect soon to initiate several new members." This is the last mention of Dariel in *The Sphinx* in 1931.

In January 1932, Dariel was elected to succeed himself as president of golden Gate Assembly No. 2. "The members, appreciating his fine work during the year, induced him to hold office for another year and carry our assembly forward," reported Dr. A. Schwartz. Every indication is that he was a popular and capable leader, qualities we have seen develop over his lifetime. In an assembly report in *The Sphinx* later in the year, Schwartz concluded, "If our president, Dariel Fitzkee, continues to handle the affairs of the Assembly in his efficient manner, it will not surprise the writer to see him re-elected to office the next year."

That Dariel was also liked and appreciated by magicians other than in his home assembly is evident from these comments in *The Linking Ring* for May 1931: "[A member of the Oakland Magic Circle is] the active and energetic president of the Golden Gate Assembly, Dariel Fitzkee. Fitzkee manages to not only attend all the business meetings of the O.M.C. but also performs at their monthly socials and shows. He not only performs but manages to present new effects, being one of those who quickly demonstrates whether late effects on the market 'can be worked.'"

In *The Linking Ring*, April 1932, a report on activities in the Bay Area tells us: "Dariel Fitzkee, President of Golden Gate Assembly No. 2, and also member of the O.M.C., entertained Dr. Tarbell at his home before the Dr. left for Colorado." Harlan Tarbell was an eminent magician from Chicago, famous for *The Tarbell Course in Magic* and for his "Magic of the Ages" program presented under the direction of the Pond Lecture Bureau. This is the first evidence in print we have of Dariel and Marcia entertaining famous magicians in their home, which would become a common practice. In the basement of the 43rd Avenue home, Dariel set up a woodshop and constructed a stage with lighting and drapery. It included a specially painted backdrop like the ones he created for Acme Scenic Studios in Chicago, that changed from one scene to another by simply changing the stage lighting. The Fitzkees' home became a favorite gathering place for magic performances, movies



The San Francisco War Memorial Opera House and the beautiful and complicated Opera House curtain that Dariel designed in 1932.

of magicians – which Dariel began to take in the early '30s – and other social occasions. One of these was reported in the February 1932 *Linking Ring*: "The January social of the Oakland Magic Circle was held at the home of Dariel Fitzkee, in San Francisco. Mr. Fitzkee has fitted up a miniature show house in the basement of his spacious residence, a stage with drop curtain, side drapes, lights and up-to-date accessories, make the place seem like the real thing when it comes to putting on a program.... Dariel Fitzkee topped the entertainment off by appearing in a character stunt as a real old time 'Quack Doctor,' as done in the good old medicine show days. Anyhow it was voted a good meeting, most everyone got home by 4 a.m."

In the June 1932 *Sphinx* we find this startling bit of news. At their national convention in May at Detroit, the National Council elected Dariel Fitzkee second vice-president of The Society of American Magicians! This was a remarkable event, with no indication in the literature to suggest that he was under consideration. Today the S.A.M. requires that nominations for national office be placed four months prior to the national convention (which is generally held in July as opposed to the Memorial Day weekend usual to the 1930s). In this way, all assemblies have ample time to discuss the qualifications of nominees and instruct their delegates how to vote at the convention. In the 1930s, nominations for second and first vice presidents were made at the convention, and sometimes, as we will see, national presidents – often men who had held neither second nor first vice president offices – were nominated and elected at the convention. Who nominated Dariel Fitzkee? We do not know.

The Society of American Magicians at that time was heavily skewed to the East Coast, and probably 80 percent of the membership lived no farther west than Chicago or St. Louis. Society activity centered around New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, Detroit, and Chicago. Dariel was the first magician from the West Coast ever elected to national office – and he had never been further east than Chicago!

We believe three factors were involved in this election. First was the growth in membership and the greatly increased activity of the Golden Gate Assembly under Dariel's leadership. They had an annual banquet, contests within their own assembly, and the annual contest with the Oakland Magic Circle, which included a large public show. Second, we know that the assembly hosted prominent magicians playing in San Francisco whenever possible, men such as The Great Raymond, Howard Thurston, Harlan Tarbell, and we suspect many more who were not mentioned in the sporadic magazine reports. Dariel and his charming and lovely wife, Marcia, were gracious hosts, and Dariel would have been seen as totally dedicated to magic. "What is there in magic to attract me? ... I find it utterly fascinating. No one, I am sure, spends more time in study and research than myself. What for? You try to answer that. I can't." That would have resonated with the men who were equally dedicated to magic. Third, perhaps the officers and delegates who attended the convention, almost all from the East Coast, felt it was time to honor a magician from the west. Did Dariel know that he was to be considered? There is nothing anywhere to suggest this, but surely, by letter or by telegram, he was consulted. In any case, it was a great honor, and at age 34 he had reached a milestone of sorts. His assembly was delighted.

Marcia on opening night of the new Opera House.

Although Dariel was now working for Stage Equipment Studios rather than for himself, he applied himself to the challenges set before him. In 1931, the company was awarded the contract to provide the stage equipment, including all stage draperies, for the new Opera House of the San Francisco War Memorial, dedicated to all those who fought in World War I. In "Opera House Stage Largest in America," an article in the November 1932 *The Architect and Engineer*, Dariel wrote that the stage was "one of the world masterpieces of engineering." He went on to describe how Stage Equipment Studios and other companies had created something truly magnificent. What he did not say was that he had been the designer of the front curtain, which, unlike most curtains of its kind, had the facility of draping itself in any desired shape or design at any desired speed. It was operated by an all-electrical device called the "opera drape," so named because its first use anywhere in the world was on the Opera House stage. When completed, the Beaux Arts structure stood proudly as the newest and best opera house in the country, and earned a cover story in *Time* magazine, which hailed it as "easily the most attractive and practical building of its kind in the United States. Beaux Arts architecture, fashionable from 1885 to 1932, is noted for the use of grandiose Greek and Roman forms with a profusion of classical columns, pilasters, and balustrades, highly decorated with ornate sculpture reminiscent of the Renaissance. The Opera House was the last Beaux Arts structure of any significance to be built in America.

On Saturday evening, October 15, 1932, more than 4000 music lovers packed the house for its premier performance, a production of Puccini's *Tosca*. Marveling at the grandeur and beauty of the building, the audience, including Marcia, lovely in a new gown, settled in to listen to the overture as her husband, Dariel, did a last-minute check of the electrical controls. "The enthusiastic audience hushed as maestro Gaetano Merola raised his baton, and, for the first time, the beautiful gold brocade curtain 'of seeming wrought gold billowed upward, like receding waves on a vertical beach.'" The controls for the curtain were so intricate that for several months while the Opera House personnel learned the system, Dariel had to attend productions to ensure that the curtain worked properly.

The Opera House is still in use today, although after the 1989 earthquake it underwent major restoration, including repainting and rebuilding. Auerbach Consultants, who oversaw much of the restoration and who provided the above description of the curtain on their website, wrote that considerable time was spent to make sure the main curtain was historically correct. "We sent a sample of the original 1932 curtain, a gold Brocatelle with swagged valances, jabots and tassels, to the fabric manufacturer Scalamandré of Long Island, New York.... Using computer technology, the original design was corrected to fit the dimensional standards of the new curtain, and a computerized loom, operating for two shifts a day for two months, custom wove nearly 2000 yards of silk into the historic replica." – something the Stage Equipment Studios, under Dariel's direction, did by hand. In the restoration, Dariel's revolutionary electrical "opera drape" was replaced by computerized motors that did not exist in 1932.

In 1997, following the restoration, the Opera House opened for its 65th season. The production of *Tosca* was once again brought to life just as it had been on October 15, 1932, and once again "the beautiful gold brocade curtain of seeming wrought gold billowed upward, like receding waves on a vertical beach."

Dariel's design and construction of that curtain must rank as the greatest achievement of his life to that point and among the top five accomplishments of his lifetime. It clearly showed his remarkable ability to master the technology of the day in designing innovative electrical circuits and hardware that enabled the curtain to flow upwards. This was not something he had learned in school or college – he was self-taught. He showed the vision to design a curtain that could rise 50 feet in any shape or design that was both practical and artistic. The achievement was remarkable.

Magical accolades continued into 1933 from Bay Area magicians. Clement Fisher Jr. commented on Dariel's contributions as follows: "Although there are many old-timers in our Assembly who have done much toward the promotion of the organization, it has been President Fitzkee's tireless efforts during the past two years that have materially advanced the assembly on the S.A.M. map. We have, in every possible way, forged ahead. New members in large numbers have been added to the roster; ethics and standards have been raised to still higher peaks; techniques and methods, to switch to the practical side of the matter, have been aided so that our compeers may better present their work. It is altogether fitting and proper that this honor [national second vice-president] be presented to a man who has advanced the art, the science of magic so materially on this side of the nation. Would that magicdom could be guided by men as capable and willing as President Fitzkee."

He continued to be an active performer for both the assembly and the Oakland Magic Circle, organizing a benefit show for the San Francisco branches of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, of which he was a member, and leading his assembly team against those of the O.M.C. in their annual contest. The assembly had won the trophy two years in a row. A third win would give them the right to keep the contest trophy forever! Naturally the Golden Gaters were up for the job, pinning their hopes on their past president Dariel Fitzkee; but Oakland was equally prepared. "Mr. Dariel Fitzkee with two assistants in Hindoo costumes and settings offered the substitution trunk, in this effect the trunk bottom and sides were lined with sheets of metal. The substitution was effected in a very short time. Then Fitzkee was locked in a large cabinet and immediately reappeared running down the aisle to the stage to close the act."

Oakland's Lloyd Jones was elected the first president of the new P.C.A.M. In some respects he and Dariel were rivals on the Bay Area magic scene.

"Regardless of who wins," the scribe reported, "the opposition rises up in a body with cries of 'robber.' This year the judges were prepared to award the contest to the Golden Gate Assembly but the judge who voted for Oakland raised such a protest that the third judge, being of a very timid and retiring nature, refused to vote and the official verdict was a tie. The contest will have to be repeated next year! The real result of the show, however, was a marvelous performance played to an enthusiastic and packed house." We will see that the Substitution Trunk will play an important role later in Dariel's performing career.

Two months later, another report of a second showing of his "old time medicine show" act emphasizes Dariel's versatility. "The comedy number of the evening was staged by our Illustrious Past President Dariel Fitzkee, who baffled the boys completely with his makeup as an old medicine show doctor in the old-style manner with much clever patter and ballyhoo, ending the act by bringing the writer on stage where he did some high-class stooging in a skeleton costume, after which the doctor gets the medicine mixed up with the furniture polish causing me instantly to turn into a chair...."

Later that month, Dariel was elected national first vice-president at the national convention in Boston, with Chicago's William R. Walsh as second vice-president and William McCaffrey of Pittsburgh as national president. Once again, he was not present at this event. We wonder if Dariel was cognizant of the full import of his election. He was now positioned to become the National President of The Society of American Magicians – in just one short year!

In late June 1933, Dariel traveled to southern California on business. We know that through his work he developed an acquaintance with movie impresario Sid Grauman of Grauman's Chinese Theater and the Egyptian Theatre fame. Those two cinema houses were far and away the most famous theaters to be built in the golden age of Hollywood, not only for the foot and handprints in the cement around Grauman's Chinese Theater but also for the very great number of cinema premiers held at the two theaters. It is very likely that Grauman was interested in the services of Stage Equipment Studios and possibly as a result of Dariel's remarkable Opera House curtain. The trip gave Dariel the opportunity to meet southern California magicians who were very good and very different from East Coast magicians, and they no doubt looked forward to meeting the National First Vice President of The Society of American Magicians. Dariel attended the Southern California Assembly No. 22 and probably met William Larsen. The Assembly No. 22 scribe reports that Dariel treated them to movies he had taken of famous magicians. It is clear from that assembly's report that he impressed them with his personality and abilities.

The year 1933 saw the establishment of the Pacific Coast Association of Magicians (P.C.A.M.) at a magic convention in Seattle, Washington. Lloyd Jones, who was instrumental in organizing the association, was elected its first president. As has been written, both the East and the West felt that West Coast magicians were far removed from the centers of magic activities in New York City and Boston, and magicians in the East considered the quality of magic west of The Mississippi to be just a notch or two below that of the East. West Coast magicians were tired of that elitist attitude and by establishing their own organization they were making a statement – we don't really care what you [the East] think about us; we are going to do our own thing. And while the Southern California Assembly

Sleight of Hand, 1930s

would continue to respect and be an active part in The Society of American Magicians, most of the members of that assembly, including Bill Larsen, who was president of the assembly, would lend great support to the fledgling P.C.A.M. As we will see, the P.C.A.M. would be important to Dariel, as well. Lloyd Jones left Seattle with a commitment to host the 1934 P.C.A.M. convention in Oakland.

Dariel's reputation extended beyond the Society, and the new P.C.A.M. officers and opinion leaders in the International Brotherhood of Magicians also applauded his qualities. Buffalo, New York's Bob Weill, a regular and popular columnist in *The Linking Ring,* wrote in the June, 1933 issue, "A guy I think a lot of – and am sorry I don't live nearer – is Dariel Fitzkee. He's got the real slant on magic! He knows how to write it so you can understand it. He can visualize what's good or bad about an effect. And I'll bet a cookie to a doughnut he puts over everything with a bang. He's a great guy and a real friend."

In the meantime, Dariel was busy promoting The Society of American Magicians as a national organization. In 1932, he had proposed to Lloyd Jones the idea that the Oakland Magic Circle and the Golden Gate Assembly should join together to form one big Bay Area society of magicians. Jones and other officers of the Oakland Magic Circle did not dismiss it out of hand, but Lloyd likely recognized that two strong personalities like his and Dariel's could easily create a tension that might have adverse effects on Bay Area magic. A good part of the fun of being a magician in the Bay Area lay in the good-natured competition between the two organizations. Dariel's suggestion would float around for a couple of years, but nothing would ever come of it.

Dariel's national responsibilities centered on membership growth and assembly support. He sent out a bulletin of suggestions for the officers of the assemblies of the Society filled with good material, but particularly interesting were his suggestions on how to make meetings interesting. Among his suggestions were: have short business meetings with time limits on debate; and delegate as much of the business of the club as possible to committees; have a centrally located meeting place; arrange magic programs ahead of time; hold contests and give every encouragement to all the members to participate; regularly hold ladies' night entertainments (there were very, very few lady magicians in those days); eliminate cliques; and hold joint meetings with magicians' clubs in the same locality. These were all suggestions that had worked with Dariel's assembly, The Golden Gate Assembly No. 2.

It has long been recognized that the way to grow national membership is to improve the desirability of belonging to the local clubs. This was especially true of The Society of American Magicians at the time because one had to belong to an assembly – there was no associate category of membership at the time. This is one reason why the New York Parent Assembly was so large, because magicians from anywhere could belong to that assembly. (Parent Assembly refers to the fact that for the first fifteen years of the Society, there were no assemblies and that all national officers had to be from the New York City area. As Harry Houdini became involved in the national politics of the Society, he emphasized the need for branches of the Society, assemblies, to be established around the country for the good of magic and for the health of the Society. Houdini became National President in May, 1917, a position he held until his untimely death in 1926. At the same National Council meeting where he was elected, San Francisco's Golden Gate Assembly officially became Assembly No. 2.)

In 1933, the National Council created a Committee on Public Relations to promote the Society. The chair was a New Yorker by the name of Julien J. Proskauer, of whom we will learn more later. The committee was given the charge of working with Dariel in promoting a national membership drive.

As 1933 became 1934, Dariel continued to function as a West Coast ambassador for the S.A.M. and began suggesting to the eastern magicians that the S.A.M. consider holding its national convention in the West. In April he and Marcia hosted an evening in honor of Harry Blackstone Sr., who was performing in San Francisco. A packed house was treated to a most interesting few hours of magic in Dariel's "smart, miniature theater" and to an inspiring visit with Blackstone. Dariel also arranged for and managed a benefit show for the San Francisco Polytechnic High School parent-teachers club, and played an important part in that show.

Chapter 9

S.A.M. National Politics and The Great Railroad Project

In April 1934, Dariel sent a letter to the officers of all assemblies outlining his qualifications to be national president. It is our belief that the predominantly eastern membership, and certainly the leadership in New York City and, to a lesser extent, Chicago, had no intention of letting a Westerner become national president. They realized, perhaps rightly so, that such an arrangement would not be practical. New York held a powerful influence over the National Council. Voting delegates were based on assembly membership, and the Parent Assembly held six votes by itself. Past national presidents had voting privileges, and most of them were from New York or had New York leanings.

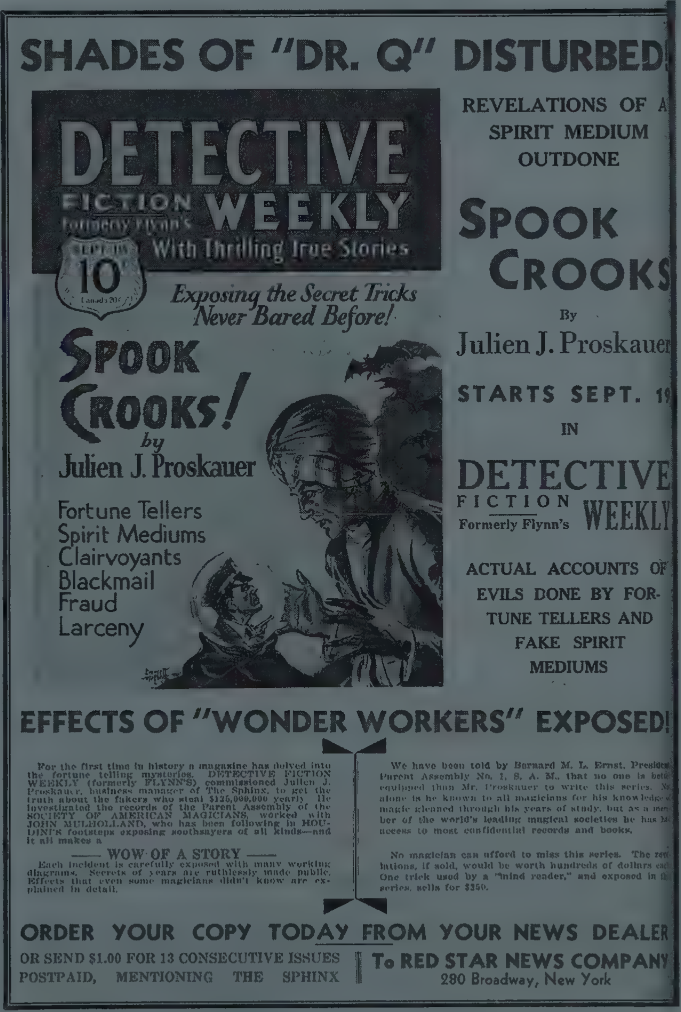
But Dariel was not the only one to send a letter. William Walsh, the national second vice-president from Chicago, sent a letter as well. It was not unusual for first vice-presidents not to stand for national president, or for the National Council to accept new nominations from the floor when a first vice president decided not to run. But in this case it appears that Dariel was interested in becoming national president. We have no way of knowing what kind of support he had. We know that the Southern California Assembly No. 22 determined to cast its vote for Dariel, as stated in their assembly report published in *The Sphinx*. No other assemblies indicated in print how they intended to vote, with the exception of the New York Parent Assembly. Their May report states, "The six delegates of the Parent Assembly were instructed to cast their votes at the National Council meeting in Pittsburgh for Julien J. Proskauer for president!"

Julien J. Proskauer of New York City became a member of the Parent Assembly of the Society in April 1930, a few months after Dariel Fitzkee joined in San Francisco. Proskauer was a few years older than Dariel, but not much. He was clearly a remarkable man. He had been a fighter pilot in World War I and was a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Service Reserve and would soon be elected vice-president of the American Society of Pilots and Aviators. He had been an executive for Hearst newspapers from coast to coast for eight years, was vice-president of one of America's oldest and largest printing and advertising consultant corporations, and was listed as a vice president of companies in New York City, Hartford, and Philadelphia. He was an expert on publicity and public relations. He was known for his expertise in aviation, publicity, photography, the printing business, and small arms and would even publish a book one day on mixed drinks that is still available. He excelled at any endeavor he chose to pursue and sought to become a recognized expert in those fields. He had intelligence, time, and money to achieve whatever goals he set for himself and a deep-seated belief that he, perhaps more than any other, knew best how to run whatever organization he was involved in. Furthermore, he was a man of action who sought immediate gratification. If fame was his goal, he wanted it *now!* Magic would be no exception.

Proskauer's background in newspaper work taught him about the power of the press.

Within a year, he had convinced editor John Mulholland and the officers of *The Sphinx* (who also happened to be officers of the Parent Assembly) that he should become the business manager for the magazine. Almost immediately, subscribers noticed an increase in advertising. Unfortunately they also noticed Proskauer's first flaw. He had not been involved with magicians or the Society long enough to know the reverence magicians hold for the magic arts. Although Proskauer was successful at raising advertising revenue, while he was business manager *The Sphinx* ran ads for Thom McCann Shoes, Chesterfield Cigarettes and even McFadden's "12-in-1 Muscle Building Outfit – Big Muscles Quick!" Most magicians were appalled to see such ads in a magic magazine; and we suspect that Mulholland, who had been a teacher by profession, was overwhelmed by Proskauer's dynamic personality. Whether by persuasion or intimidation, Mulholland went along with a number of Proskauer's suggestions, quite possibly against his better judgment.

In July 1931, after being a member of the Society for only one year, Proskauer was elected a trustee of the Parent Assembly and at the same time convinced the assembly officers to establish a committee to be known as the "Press Bureau" with himself in charge. Ostensibly this group was to help members of the assembly with publicity. However, in just one month the Press Bureau took on a purpose of its own and began a public crusade "to rid New York of fortune tellers." Proskauer was relentless in his efforts to put before the public the name of the Press Bureau, and, oh yes, The Society of American Magicians – giving the impression that the national organization, not simply the Parent Assembly, was behind the crusade. Conspicuous in every press release was the name Julien J. Proskauer. Interestingly enough, the August *Sphinx* featured a back cover ad (the back cover being the favored position for adver-



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Exposing the Secret Tricks Never Bared Before!

SPOOK CROOKS!
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Fortune Tellers
Spirit Mediums
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REVELATIONS OF A SPIRIT MEDIUM OUTDONE

SPOOK CROOKS
By
Julien J. Proskauer

STARTS SEPT. 1
IN
DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY
Formerly Flynn's

ACTUAL ACCOUNTS OF EVILS DONE BY FORTUNE TELLERS AND FAKE SPIRIT MEDIUMS

EFFECTS OF "WONDER WORKERS" EXPOSED!

For the first time in history a magazine has delved into the fortune telling mysteries. DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY (formerly FLYNN'S) commissioned Julien J. Proskauer, business manager of The Sphinx, to get the truth about the fakers who steal $125,000,000 yearly. He investigated the records of the Parent Assembly of the SOCIETY OF AMERICAN MAGICIANS, worked with JOHN MULHOLLAND, who has been following in HOUDINI'S footsteps exposing soothsayers of all kinds—and it all makes a

— WOW OF A STORY —

Each incident is carefully exposed with many working diagrams. Secrets of years are ruthlessly made public. Effects that even some magicians didn't know are explained in detail.

We have been told by Bernard M. L. Ernst, Presid Parent Assembly No. 1, S. A. M., that no one is bett equipped than Mr. Proskauer to write this series. N alone is he known to all magicians for his knowledge magic gleaned through his years of study, but as a mem ber of the world's leading magical societies he has access to most confidential records and books.

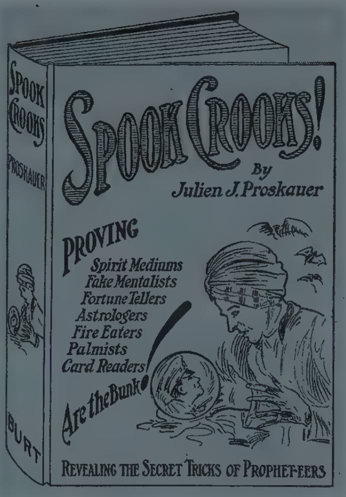
No magician can afford to miss this series. The rev lations, if sold, would be worth hundreds of dollars ea One trick used by a "mind reader," and exposed in th series, sells for $250.

ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY FROM YOUR NEWS DEALER

OR SEND $1.00 FOR 13 CONSECUTIVE ISSUES POSTPAID, MENTIONING THE SPHINX

To RED STAR NEWS COMPANY
280 Broadway, New York

In 1931 Julien J. Proskauer became business manager for The Sphinx magazine. Shortly thereafter ads for Detective Weekly, featuring Proskauer's expose series, appeared on the back cover of The Sphinx and ran for three months. A few months later an ad for his book, Spook Crooks, appeared in The Sphinx. By that time Proskauer had resigned as business manager.



Proskauer's book Spook Crooks appeared shortly after the S.A.M. Parent Assembly's Press Bureau, headed by Proskauer, garnered national attention in a crusade against fraudulent mediums. That campaign obviously boosted sales of the book.

tising) for *Detective Weekly* magazine, which announced a new series titled "Spook Crooks – Fortune Tellers, Spirit Mediums, Clairvoyants, Blackmail, Fraud, Larceny," by, yes, Julien J. Proskauer. This ad ran for three months, each time on the back cover. Also, Proskauer's photograph appeared on the cover of the September issue of *The Sphinx*. Once again, Proskauer showed his ignorance of magic and magicians. In exposing the methods of so-called spook crooks in his articles, Proskauer also exposed many methods used by legitimate magicians who specialized in mind-reading and mental magic. Assemblies across the country flooded the parent assembly and *The Sphinx* office with letters of protest. Meanwhile, the business manager certainly got great press, and, in spite of this strong protest, in December the officers of the Parent Assembly awarded loving cups to Proskauer and each member of the Press Bureau for their excellent work. Three weeks later a full-page ad in *The Sphinx* announced: "Parent Assembly Campaign Against Fortune Tellers Ends!" Of course, the committee, under Proskauer, stated that its campaign had been successful, and that "the community service the magicians have rendered in the campaign just closed is priceless and magicians will find the public not lacking in appreciation." We find it odd that Proskauer announced the campaign over at the same time he announced that, "due to the pressure of [his] own business and the time required to be devoted to the Press Bureau...," he had to resign as business manager of *The Sphinx*. It is our opinion that the press bureau ended its campaign for two reasons, neither of which had anything to do with its success. We believe that pressure was brought to bear on the Press Bureau because of the vocal and written protests of exposure by many prominent magicians and several of the largest assemblies, including Chicago; we also believe that Proskauer had completed his hidden, personal agenda. Two months later, his hard-bound book *Spook Crooks*, an amplification of the *Detective Weekly* articles, was released to the magic and general public. The committee was disbanded, and the Press Bureau was not heard from again. In a few short months, national awareness of the evils of fake fortune tellers soared as a result of vigorous efforts of the Press Bureau and articles in *Detective Weekly* written by Proskauer, the Bureau's chairman. The public was primed for the release of Proskauer's book on the same topic. It is hard to see a coincidence there.

Because of the exposure of magic methods in the *Detective Weekly* and in *Spook Crooks*, assemblies from around the country called for the Parent Assembly and the National Council to censure Proskauer. But the influence of the Parent Assembly on the National Council was so great and Proskauer's hold on the parent assembly so strong, that he did not even receive a warning. By the following August Proskauer was again at work for *The Sphinx*, although this time only as advertising director. Then, in November, a new committee of the Parent Assembly was established, the Public Relations Committee, with Proskauer as chair.

Over the next year and a half, Proskauer was busy. To his credit, there are several references to his performing at Parent Assembly functions and elsewhere, including doing illusions. The Public Relations Committee provided a full-page "Parent Assembly News" feature in every issue of *The Sphinx* using a distinctive newspaper-like format. This enabled Proskauer to run a regular column every month on topics of his choosing and thereby

The lighting on this publicity photo of Proskauer was meant to create a dramatic effect. It does that, but it also gives him a somewhat sinister appearance.

keep his name before the magic public. He also wrote feature articles such as "Magicians, Make Money!" and "Getting Publicity" for *The Sphinx* and published two more books, *Suckers All* (the tricks of the gamblers), released by the Macaulay Company, and *How'd Ja Do That*, (a book of simple magic tricks) released by W.C. Popper & Co.

In May of 1934, Proskauer , who was not interested in the usual progression through S.A.M. offices, was poised to seek the national presidency as his first national office . We do not know the details of what happened. We know that *Sphinx* editor John Mulholland wrote in his review of the S.A.M. 1934 National Convention that "the promised fireworks in the election did not materialize and in a most friendly meeting the following officers were unanimously elected to serve: William Walsh, national president; Julien J. Proskauer, first vice president; Commander C.C. Slayton, second vice president. There was no indication that Dariel Fitzkee had been at the convention, for he wasn't. The following year, Julien Proskauer became the national president. That was followed by a year as president of the Parent Assembly and then several years as executive director of the Parent Assembly Board of Trustees, a position of great power. In fact, at that point in the Society's history the executive Director of the Parent Assembly had more power than did the national president. Proskauer became the object of considerable antagonism and even enmity, and good men would resign from the S.A.M. because of the control he exercised over the Society. He would be accused once again of exposure, and his *How'd Ja Do That* would be shown to be in large part lifted from an earlier 1921 publication by Hugh Johnston titled *Modern Card Miracles*, much of it verbatim! He would eventually cease his activity with The Society of American Magicians and turn his loyalty toward the Magicians Guild and, with Walter Gibson, publish *The Conjurors Magazine* for five years. He would pass from this earth in 1958.

Did Dariel feel that he could not win against "the establishment" and withdraw? Did he withdraw because he recognized the cost of being a national president would be too great a drain on his resources? With most of the assemblies east of the Mississippi, Dariel would have had great trouble keeping proper communications with those assemblies and New York City was still the magic center of the U.S. at that time. His suggestion to hold the national convention in San Francisco fell on deaf ears, and we believe that a San Francisco convention was his only hope for being able to afford to be national president, for even when employed he did not have the resources to go to a convention in the East. The end of his employment meant the end of any real hope he had for that high office.

This is what we believe happened, based only on what we understand of the times and having only a few pieces of the puzzle. Sometime in early 1934, Dariel returned home from the Stage Equipment Studios with a black eye and probably a smile on his face. His relationship with the manager, Fred Turner, had always been tense, and it is possible that Dariel had a final disagreement with Turner that resulted in a scuffle. Remember that Dariel was only about five feet six inches tall, but he was afraid of no one, and if provoked and in the right, he was not above popping the other fellow. Every indication is that Dariel's black eye was one of those instances where "you should have seen the other guy"! We kind of like that about his personality. The down side of that circumstance was that he was now out of work in the middle of the depression when jobs were almost impossible to find.

Dariel sent letters to assemblies in late April stating his intention to run for the presidency, so we believe the Stage Equipment Studios episode happened in February 1934, several weeks before he wrote that letter, and that he harbored hopes he would find employment soon and still be able to serve if elected. Since Walsh had sent a letter out as well stating his own similar intentions, Dariel knew he had a race on his hands. He did not know about Proskauer, since that decision was not made public until May 5, after the Parent Assembly officers had read both the Fitzkee and Walsh letters. It is possible that Proskauer contacted delegates from other assemblies, but that is not indicated anywhere except in a 1963 cover feature on Russ Walsh in *The New Tops* magazine. Frances Ireland Marshall wrote that Walsh became national president only "after a long and bitter campaign waged with Julien Proskauer. So hot did the campaign run," she wrote, "that the Chicago Assembly took up a purse to help defray expenses, the cost of printing and postage having become too much for one man." She also indicated that Dariel threw his support behind Walsh. We personally suspect that Proskauer did not make a formal announcement. We think his friends in New York City waged a political campaign, contacting old friends and calling in favors, and that Proskauer intended to go to the convention with enough delegate votes to take the election by surprise. Dariel, recognizing that he was not in a financial position to serve as president, withdrew his name sometime prior to the end of May and threw his support behind Walsh.

Proskauer obviously did not have enough votes. There is no way he would have stepped away from the presidency if he did have. It seems clear that Walsh convinced Proskauer to accept the nomination for first vice president, and Walsh, who had been second vice president, moved up to president and Proskauer filled in the vacant first vice presidency. In our opinion, the best man for the job simply could not afford to run. It would be another ten years before another Californian, Ray Muse, retired and with time and resources to handle the responsibilities, became the first person from the West to be elected national president of The Society of American Magicians.

Having won the election, William Walsh asked in his first presidential message that "certain phases of the past be forgotten, that we erase from our mind some of the things that may have bothered us, that we start anew.... It takes a big man to admit mistakes. We all make them. I am sure we came away from the Pittsburgh meeting with a better understanding of each others aims and purposes." Since there had been no controversy about Walsh, we believe this referred to discussions between Walsh and Proskauer regarding Proskauer's activities and Proskauer's agreement to accept the first vice presidency.

A few months before this, in late February, 1934, with hope still alive, Dariel began an extensive letter-writing campaign to several major railroad companies throughout the nation with a proposal designed to increase railroad ticket sales, which had naturally slumped because of the depression. Letters were sent to the Union Pacific System, New York Central Lines, Southern Pacific, the Canadian Pacific, the Chicago, Rock Island

and Pacific Railroad Co., and several others, even including the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. The full proposal is a wonder of imagination, and although obviously impractical in many respects, we love the document. It is the first suggestion of the depth to which Dariel would apply his analytical mind to the topic of showmanship. We believe that this proposal campaign, begun at the time he became unemployed, was Dariel's hope for continuing the dream of becoming the national president of The Society of American Magicians. If he could sell his consulting services to just one railroad company, he would be back on track (no pun intended).

Dariel addressed his letter directly to the presidents of the railroad companies, seeking an opportunity to meet with them. "This letter is being written to you personally," he wrote, "because I suspect that no one under you would find consideration of it within his jurisdiction, incorporating as it does fundamentals affecting virtually every department having contact with the public." The letter went on to point out that the railroads were in competition not only with the new and increasingly popular airline industry, but also bus transportation and the preference for personal automobiles for long trips. "I should like an opportunity to submit to you some general ideas as to what I believe a new factor in business can accomplish for you – this factor is showmanship – as applied to railroading." He went on to acknowledge that "your first reaction upon reading this may be to put the writer down as a crank of some kind. Permit me to say that I am prepared to demonstrate to your satisfaction that I have reached the absolute top in the line of business in which I have been engaged for the past eight years..." which probably referred to his design of the Opera House curtain, or possibly the success of American Studios in general, and "...I have had extensive and varied experience as advertising man, newspaper man, showman, salesman...." The final argument in his cover letter sounded a bit pretentious: "...If you are the man of vision I understand you to be, I think you will find yourself in possession of an idea of very, very great commercial value."

The proposal itself was nine pages long and contained several reasonable suggestions such as training all personnel who come in contact with the public in communication skills to help passengers feel they are receiving personal attention, improving facilities to give a greater sense of warmth and comfort, and improving the image of railroad travel in general to make it modern and appealing. But there were also such unusual suggestions as dressing porters, conductors, and other personnel in striking attention-getting uniforms and adopting customs such as having the team of the engineer, conductors, and porters turn the train over to their replacements along the way in semi-military ceremonies. He also suggested that stations be brightened to intense brilliance, even using a battery of powerful searchlights to ballyhoo the arrival or departure, and that each major station have a "railroad band" led by a drum major on horseback to lead a parade through the town playing "Casey Jones" or "The Wreck of Old 97," and periodically promote a record run, for example from San Francisco to Chicago. "The scene is carried over the radio," wrote Dariel. "The brilliantly lighted station, the striking appearance of the train, the military bearing of the porters, the engineer poised at his throttle, the conductor standing expectantly. A hush covers over the crowd as the time arrives for the signal starting the race.... Ah! Boom! A bomb bursts in the air. There is a rush of steam and a puff from the locomotive. It's off! Gaining momentum, it starts down the track while the bands strike up 'Casey Jones.'"

The general response was what we might expect today. The New York Central lines wrote, "The general scheme has been given careful consideration.... Certain of the proposals were found to be impracticable or not adaptable for railroad use…" and from the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad, "…to my mind there is at least some doubt that the results from such a campaign would be as productive as seems to be indicated in your letter." But Dariel received this encouraging letter from the General Advertising Manager of the Southern Pacific Company dated March 7. "I have phoned you four times without being able to reach you and so I am writing you to arrange an interview," which was held later that month in San Francisco. An excited Dariel met with the managers of Southern Pacific, and around the first of April he received this follow-up response from the chief executive in the San Francisco office, the Vice-President for System Passenger Traffic: "We are greatly indebted to you for your ideas with respect to increasing the sale of rail passenger service. Your views are most interesting." The president stated that several of the ideas had been considered before, but had not been considered feasible even in modified form. "Possibly our conclusions warrant further studies." Then he paid Dariel a compliment: "Appreciating your viewpoint, we should like to be in a position to take you into our organization for further investigations, but unfortunately this cannot be done at this time." This was just enough encouragement to keep Dariel going.

In mid-April, the Union Pacific Railroad requested that Dariel meet with their representative in San Francisco, once again raising his hopes, which is why we believe he felt impressed to send his letter regarding the national presidency of the S.A.M. to the assemblies. He did not hear back from the Union Pacific until he received a letter dated May 4, 1934, referencing a report on that interview. "We must admit there is a great deal to what you say as to the unattractiveness of travel by train at the present time… much of this is due to the economies railroads have been forced to make by reason of the depression…. Doubtless a good deal of passenger travel could be induced to return to the rails if it were possible at this time to carry out some of your suggestions… but at the present time we are not in a position to carry out extensively the ideas you advance. Nevertheless, if in the future it should appear possible to put any of them in effect, we will gladly communicate with you." That was the last railroad to respond to Dariel's Grand Railroad Proposal, and with that letter his hopes died. We believe that Dariel had held out hope of being able to continue his quest for the S.A.M. national presidency until he received this letter, sometime around May 10. He likely withdrew from the race, probably writing William Walsh, and turned his attention and efforts elsewhere. The only reference we find in print regarding Dariel's opinion on the events surrounding the S.A.M. presidential campaign for 1934 are found in his book *Misdirection for Magicians*, published in 1935. In the opening pages of the book, Dariel sarcastically refers to "Mr. Proskauer's noble campaign to save the widows from despicable mediums, which campaign raised an awful row among magicians but which elected him National President of the S.A.M…. [and] mediums had to work overtime to accommodate the customers." That is, in Dariel's opinion the only person to benefit from the campaign against "fraudulent mediums" was Proskauer himself… and, ironically, the fraudulent mediums.

Although times were difficult, we find no negative comments, excuses, or complaints from Dariel. He simply turned his back on the experience, surely with a realization that he had achieved more than anyone in his position could rightly have expected. He began to focus on his family and finding some way to assist Marcia, who was now working two jobs to help make ends meet. She worked as a salesclerk at the O'Connor Moffat's department store in San Francisco during the day, leaving Dariel at home to watch over daughter Marcia, and evenings as a hat check girl at the Palace Hotel. Dariel was always a proud man, and this must have been a difficult for him. But his circumstance was not unusual in 1934, and he must be admired not only for his determined effort with the railroad proposal, but also for his efforts at performing magic for private clubs and fraternal organizations and, of course, for his writing ability that would produce two new books the coming year.

In an ironic twist we learn that around this time Dariel and his wife, Marcia, went through a spiritualism phase. "They used to do writings, but I don't remember who they did them with," recalls daughter Marcia. Dariel wrote about this later in a January, 1938 column in *Genii*:

> A young woman wearing a blindfold, pushed about by an unseen force, laboriously formed the letters of the sentence of a large sheet of heavy paper. Across the dining room table sat a man intently watching every movement. The only sound was the sound of the fog horns in the distance wailing at the entrance of the Golden Gate.
>
> There were two other sounds – the scratch of the thick pencil and the slow, heavy breathing of the man.
>
> At the head of the table sat another young woman. Her face was white.
>
> Three others, a woman and two men, sat tensely at the other end of the table.
>
> A few minutes before a message had come through the medium informing the woman at the head of the table that her mother's spirit was present. Her husband, across from the medium, skeptical, had snapped a request for identification.
>
> Then the medium wrote, "Read me some more about the ponies."
>
> The husband looked at his wife in amazement. All doubt had faded.
>
> It was quickly explained. During the mother's last illness she became interested in horse racing. Every evening the son-in-law would read to her the day's results at the tracks while the dying woman would compare the results with the forms she was keeping. Then they would read the next day's entries and prepare a chart for the new races. Occasionally they would venture a bet together.
>
> It was almost the last thing she did. Certainly, it would be the most convincing type of identification.
>
> Strange, isn't it? **I know, because I was there.**
>
> This was not the usual gathering at a mediumistic séance. All of the people here were above fraud. The husband and wife referred to had just come from Chicago for a visit. The identifying incidents took place in Chicago.
>
> The medium was not a professional. In fact, she received nothing whatever in connection with the experiment. I can personally vouch for everyone at that meeting. I know that the medium knew nothing whatever about the horse racing business. She had never met the deceased. The séance was suggested on the spur of the moment and the medium agreed reluctantly to sit.
>
> Most magicians are of the opinion that ALL mediumistic demonstrations are fraudulent. Nothing could be further from the truth.
>
> I am not saying that ANY of the mediumistic performances are GENUINE manifestations from the so-called spirit world. I am not saying that there are spirits. Or that the dead return.
>
> But I am insisting that mediums all over the world are demonstrating the

> presence of something–spiritualism or telepathy–call it what you will, repeatedly. Certainly ALL of the results they achieve are not based on methods familiar to even well-posted magicians.
>
> Any open-minded magician who may care to undertake an extended investigation of this so-called spiritualistic phenomena, who witnesses a sufficient number of such performances, embracing the work of a widely scattered field of mediums, is going to come away from many of those meetings completely at a loss for explanation for some of the results which he may witness.
>
> I know this to be true. This has been my experience.

The couple from Chicago were undoubtedly Dariel's brother, Pike, and his wife Lou. Dariel was the second man present and the third quite possibly his brother, Dick. Who was the medium? Was it Marcia? Maybe not, perhaps this was a time when she was working nights at the Palace Hotel. Was it Dick's wife? We'll never know.

Is this fascinating confession out of character for the logic-minded Fitzkee? Later in the article Dariel enumerates several prominent scientists who believed in the possibility of spiritualism. "Would it not be presumptuous of us to place our own feeble brains above these giants without a thorough investigation?" Fitzkee asks.

Fitzkee's daughter has no recollection of her father ever again discussing the possibility of communication with the dead. She was not even aware that her father had written the *Genii* article. Fitzkee never mentioned it again in print, as far as we have been able to determine. Note that he does not state that he believed in such communication, but at the least he considered the possibility of telepathy. This is an interesting side of Dariel Fitzkee that he revealed only briefly – just enough to pique our curiosity!

Dariel's interest in such matters was strong enough that he studied the methods used by those who were outright frauds. *The San Francisco Examiner* for Friday, June 14, 1935, ran a story titled 'REV.' WOODS' TRICK EXPOSED BY S.F. MAN. It seems that a "Reverend" Sam Woods of Redwood City was doing a brisk business foretelling futures for socialites by means of sand reading. He would have his customer write a request for information on a slip of paper, fold it, and hand it to him. Woods then secretly switched the folded slip for a duplicate and burnt the duplicate in front of the client. The original was secretly slipped to a confederate by means of a specially prepared table with a slot where the original slip could be disposed of surreptitiously, falling to a position accessible to the confederate. The confederate then opened the note, wrote the information on the bottom of a plate, and covered it with sand.

Woods asked for the sand plate, which an assistant placed on the table where it could be seen by the victim to be simply a broad plate covered with perhaps a quarter-inch layer of sand. The Reverend supposedly read the sand, much the same way Gypsies read tea leaves. But in the process, he tipped the plate towards himself and moved fingers through the sand, revealing the writing underneath. The tipping action hid this from the victim. As he moved his fingers about the sand, reading the message, he was able to destroy the evidence at the same time. Woods then answered the question and set the plate on the table where it could be examined. This was all explained in the article by San Francisco business man and magician, Dariel Fitzkee.

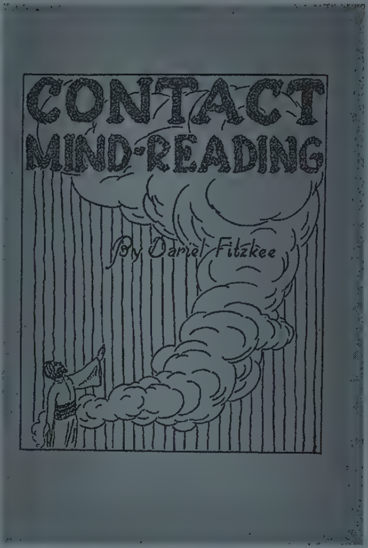
Chapter 10

New Books, Genii Magazine and the P.C.A.M. Opera House Show

Considering the difficult economic times, we must applaud what Dariel and Marcia did with their lives. Dariel had to sell the 43rd Avenue house because of his financial problems, but fortunately the new owner allowed the Fizkees to continue living there as renters. Their daughter, Marcia Dobbs, has many fond memories of those years on 43rd Avenue. At times Dariel was busy in his workshop making his own magic equipment, and many were the nights Marcia could hear the sound of the typewriter coming up through the heating ducts.

Dariel and Marcia had many friends in magic, through Freemasonry, members of the Christian Science Church that Marcia attended in the thirties, and from Dariel's work. One of them was Charles Seeger, brother of popular local bandleader Rudy Seeger. Marcia had been introduced to Charles at the 4th Street Church of Christian Science by Marco and Fanchon and he became a good friend. Charles had an old hunting lodge on the Russian River, about 50 miles north of San Francisco. It had big, screened porches; and, when the weather was right, as many as thirty friends would gather there for the weekend. They had trunks of old costumes and would take turns performing the dozens of skits that Dariel had written, all accompanied by Charles Seeger on the piano. He was an excellent pianist and the nights always ended with "stump the piano player." They would dress in the wildest costumes they could devise, and Charlie would come up with a song suitable for the costumes they were wearing. This would go on for an hour, with all of them taking turns going back stage, throwing on costumes, and coming out to have Charles play something. If magician friends were along, there would be magic acts in addition to the slapstick blackout skits they all loved so much.

When the friends weren't on the Russian River, they gathered at the Fitzkees' – the site of all entertainment in the city. Dariel and Marcia had their own trunk of costumes in their basement theater: Roman helmets, military uniforms, raccoon coats, feather boas, beaded dresses, wigs, false beards – and a piano. In addition to the skits, Dariel would do magic, and their friends would boo him and cheer him with equal enthusiasm, often at the same time. Daughter Marcia, who can still conjure up visions of Haile Salassie, Emperor of Ethopia, with a big beard and a cannon and a pretty, tiny, very British friend who wore a death mask that was going to make her beautiful, which it did. Marcia would be sent to bed where she would curl up on the floor and listen to those wonderful times through the vent, times of laughter and gaiety and friendships and fun in the middle of the Great Depression. The next morning, daughter Marcia would go downstairs in the backstage area and watch her father put everything away. There was a huge pile of costumes and it seemed like it took him days. Those good times filled the decade of the 1930s.



The Great Depression was a time of financial hardship for Dariel, as it was for most Americans. To supplement his income Dariel turned to his typewriter and produced Contact Mind Reading, the first of two books written in 1935.

Dariel's brother Dick continued to live with them for a time before he married and moved into a place of his own nearby. He became a top salesman and successful in his own right. And, true to his promise to his mother, Dariel asked his younger sister, Coralyn, to live with them. She did for a short time in the early thirties when she was fourteen or so, but missed the Midwest and soon moved back.

In August 1934, the Pacific Coast Association of Magicians (P.C.A.M.) held its convention in Oakand with 150 in attendance, including Dariel, who performed at the convention. At this convention, he became friends with the new P.C.A.M. president, southern California's Caryl Fleming. "Because of the fact that it is quite an impossibility for most of the West Coast Magicians to make the jaunt to the East to attend the three conventions held there," Fleming wrote, "the P.C.A.M. convention assumes the importance of the S.A.M., I.B.M. and International Magicians Conference get-togethers." Dariel understood that very well! Perhaps he had something to offer the P.C.A.M., he wondered.

There is little in the magic literature about Dariel's activity over the next two years, although we do know that he participated in Assembly No. 2's "Magical Fooleries of 1935" show at the Community Playhouse in March 1935. He is listed in the program as "Dariel Fitzkee & Company." We do find him getting a bit more involved in illusions, and perhaps he produced his wife, Marcia, from the "Doll House" illusion he built in his basement workshop. A wonderful photo from those years with daughter Marcia shows Dariel and his stage paraphernalia. He continued to be active in his assembly, serving as auctioneer at the club auction and organizing the Fitzkee "amateur-night" contest.

In July, 1935, the Fitzkee family attended the P.C.A.M. convention in Hollywood, California. Beatrice Houdini, the widow of Harry Houdini, opened her Laurel Canyon home to the conventioneers, and daughter Marcia remembers the gracious woman who was so friendly to everyone. In particular, Marcia remembers the shrine to Houdini set in one corner of the room, the lighted candle, the photograph on the tri-frame, and, in the back garden set against the hillside, a bust of the great magician. Dariel also had the opportunity to meet the great South American magician, David Bamberg (Fu Manchu), son of the famous Okito, who came up from Mexico to buy some new illusions from Thayers. At the business meeting, Dariel was elected one of three members on the P.C.A.M. board from northern California.

It was not in Dariel's nature to let his wife, Marcia, be the sole breadwinner for the family. While he looked for work in his field, his typewriter was ever busy.

"It has been four years since I issued my last manuscript on magic," Dariel wrote in the foreword to *Contact Mind Reading*. "As a matter of fact I had thought that I should not write another." Needless to say, that sentence brings a smile to our lips, considering what was to come. "But here it is and I hope you like it."

Contact Mind Reading is a technique, often called "muscle reading," by which a performer can locate hidden items, often while blindfolded, while the person knowing the location of those items simply holds the performer's wrist. The modern mentalist Kreskin made a feature of "muscle reading" by having his paycheck hidden somewhere

This charming photo of Dariel and his daughter, Marcia, was taken on the theater stage Dariel built in the basement of their San Francisco home in the mid-1930s.

in the theater. With a representative of the theater jogging to keep up with him and keep his fingers on Kreskin's wrist, Kreskin would race up and down aisles and often into the balcony in search of the pay envelope. It was very convincing, fun to watch, and brought laughter and a roar of approval from the audience when the envelope was found. There was no collusion involved. Kreskin simply used a developed and practiced skill to find the envelope. In 1935, when *Contact Mind Reading* was published, the technique was little known, although it was a part of Bob Nelson's "Supermentality," which was available from Nelson Enterprises, and Alex Helstrom's "Hellstromism," whose techniques would be soon made available to the magic public. Dariel also references Newman's writings on muscle reading in *Elliott's Last Legacy* and Burlingame's work. But, while the average magician had a vague idea of how such things worked, Dariel's book provided the first text on the subject that not only taught several variations of the technique but also provided a number of scenarios for performing the technique. For example, in addition to the hidden paycheck, Dariel describes the "murder mystery effect." While the performer is out of the room, the audience decides on a victim, a weapon, which was then hidden, and, of course, the killer. A third person is selected to be the "transmitter." When the performer returns, he is blindfolded. Then, with the transmitter's fingers on his wrist, the performer travels around the audience finding first the victim, then the weapon, and finally the killer, much to the delight of the audience. Several other examples are included.

The book is mimeographed with a paper cover, somewhat like Dariel's earlier manuscripts, although the layout provides printing on both sides of the pages, whereas the earlier ones were printed on only one side of the page. Dariel explains why he preferred mimeograph to bound, printed books; "These works are intended to convey information to magicians. Their external appearance offers little attraction to the layman.... I do not consider these as books. They are actually papers of instruction, and as such I am so treating them." What was left unsaid was that he could not afford to pay to have books printed. By hand-cranking out copies as needed, he kept expenses down.

The 39-page book is excellent and was well received. *The Sphinx* reviewer stated, "It is very clearly written. Even those who do not intend to use the effect should read this book for their general information." It was Dariel's best book to date, and in it he found his own voice. His explanations are clear, thorough, and logical; the examples enable the reader to readily see how the effects might be performed. It is common for magicians to enjoy reading magic books for the pleasure of imagining how they will perform the tricks, even though they know they never will. Dariel even describes how Contact Mind Reading can be done without personal contact, but instead with the performer and the "transmitter" each holding a corner of a rolled handkerchief or a watch chain.

That it was not simply a pipe-dream or his arm-chair analysis of a technique he had read about is evidenced in a press clipping in one of Dariel's scrapbooks describing his performance at the Novato Business Men's Club dinner. (Novato is a town in the Bay Area.) No date is given, but it is in a section from the mid thirties. "D. Fitzkee, of San Francisco, and recognized as the leading magician in the State was introduced. Mr. Fitzkee entertained with a number of acts of magic which mystified those present. His pointing out, while blindfolded, members whose names had been written by others on a card and given to him, and his unraveling a supposed murder by pointing out the murderer, the victim and then finding the weapon which had been used were exceedingly clever [the murder mystery effect]. Mr. Fitzkee won the plaudits of the members and will always be a welcome guest at the club." While we are sure a number of magicians in the state would have disputed the writer's description of Dariel as "the leading magician in the State," he could, and did, deliver the goods!

John Mulholland, editor of *The Sphinx*, selected *Contact Mind Reading* as one of the 10 best magic books of 1935. Daughter Marcia once again heard the typewriter clacking away at night through the heater vents, for Dariel was already at work on the next book.

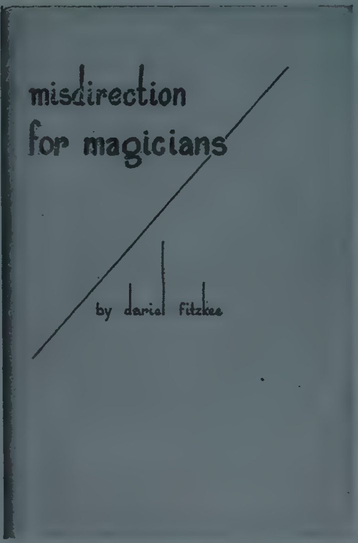
Caryl Fleming, perhaps the most influential magician on the West Coast, became a close friend to Dariel.

In the meantime, Dariel developed strong friendships with two young San Francisco magicians, Doug Kelley and Dick Madden. Doug was president of the assembly in 1935 and Dick the scribe. In a very real sense, Dariel served as their mentor, and he considered them his protégés. These were lifelong friendships.

In August the three of them attended the Oakland Magic Circle open house, and later that month Dariel welcomed Caryl Fleming, the re-elected president of the P.C.A.M., to his home. This established a friendship that would result in Dariel becoming a vice-president of the P.C.A.M. and producing an important P.C.A.M. show that would change his life.

In September, Dariel was elected to honorary membership in the exclusive southern California magic club, Los Magicos. This was, indeed, an honor. In addition to Caryl Fleming, Bill Larsen, Floyd Thayer, and a select few of the best magicians in southern California, a number of movie stars who were also amateur magicians were members, such as Harold Lloyd, Max Terhune, Fred Keating, and Chester Morris, star of the popular Boston Blackie movies.

In October 1935, the Golden Gate Assembly presented "A Night of Magic" at the Pacific Lodge of the Masonic Order. Dariel presented San Francisco's first showing of the "Walking Thru a ribbon" illusion. Caryl Fleming was present for that occasion. To promote the show Dariel arranged for Doug Kelley to drive Kelley's big touring car with the top down through the streets of San Francisco while blindfolded!



Misdirection for Magicians was the precursor of The Fitzkee Trilogy. It enjoyed excellent popularity when published in 1935.

Late in 1935, Dariel published his second book of the year, *Misdirection for Magicians,* a soft-cover book of 69 mimeographed pages. This book would establish Dariel's reputation as the "thinking magician's writer," for it was the first real analysis of the theory of magic since Maskelyne and Devant's *Our Magic* saw print in 1910. "To put the whole subject succinctly," Dariel wrote, "I think it can be said that misdirection is primarily natural, convincing acting, planned in such a way that what you do, how you look, what you say, all cooperate in drawing the spectator's eyes away from the weaker points in our effects." Here he discusses at length what he calls the ingredients of misdirection – diversion, distraction, simulation and dissimulation, and anticipation – and drawing on his considerable knowledge of magic effects, gives several examples of how those ingredients are used in tricks with which the reader would be familiar. "It is necessary [to] lay a foundation for a logical approach to practical applications of misdirection," he wrote. The first fundamental is to "be sure to have the spectator's complete attention.... with complete attention our misdirection, providing it is intelligently planned, will be effective. Without it, misdirection is impossible." Although the text borders on the pedantic, something Dariel would struggle with throughout his career, the theory falls into place when readers are instructed how to apply what he has read to his own tricks. "Study your effects," Dariel says. "Carefully dissect your presentation of them and discover the weak points. Try to classify what type of misdirection will be necessary." From there he discusses the "mechanics of misdirection," how to use misdirection with mechanical tricks as well as with sleight-of-hand. The downside to the book is the mimeographed printing, which not only makes it hard to read but also cheapens it. In his March 1936 *Sphinx* article, "A Plea for Magical Literature," Mulholland, the highly respected editor, lamented the "badly stenciled, badly mimeographed typescripts" that seemed prevalent at the time. He was not singling out Dariel, for Dariel was but one of several. The fact of the matter, however, was that for Dariel it was either mimeograph or not print at all. This book, *Misdirection for Magicians*, was the prototype for *The Fitzkee Trilogy* that would follow in the early 1940s. It introduced his scholarly approach to a theory of magic in which his logical analysis of topics would be matched only by the vast reservoir of his knowledge of magic.

The magic public liked the book. As he had done with *Contact Mind Reading*, John Mulholland placed *Misdirection for Magicians* on his list for 10 best books of the year.

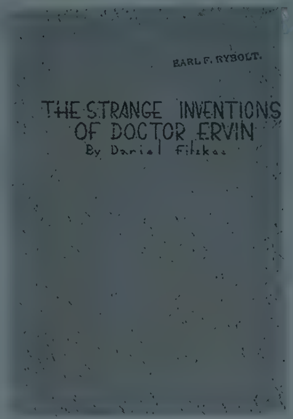
The year 1936 was a good one for Dariel. He was back in full-time employment with Gill-Mann, a company that specialized in school equipment, including that required for school auditoriums which, in the thirties, all had draperied stages. Dariel was primarily

Bill Larsen, founder and publisher of Genii Magazine, had a great respect for Dariel and quickly enlisted him as a columnist for his fledgling magazine.

involved with stage design and equipment. He continued to be active in the assembly, directing and starring in the annual show and again hosting P.C.A.M. perennial president Caryl Fleming. By April we find "the brothers Fitzkee" mentioned as Dick begins to take an increased interest in magic. He would join the S.A.M. the following year.

In September 1936, Bill Larsen published the first issue of *Genii* magazine, destined to become one of the truly great magazines in the world of magic. William W. Larsen, a defense attorney by profession, had a strong passion for magic, encouraged by Gerri Larsen, his supportive wife. They had two sons, William Jr. and Milt, who would both go on to be popular and influential figures in magic in their own right. Bill Sr. was an active participant in the Los Angeles magic scene, immediate past president of Assembly No. 22 of the S.A.M., and an active member of Los Magicos. He was a close associate of Caryl Fleming, P.C.A.M. President, and like him was tired of West Coast magicians being slighted by the New York establishment under the domination of J. J. Proskauer. This was no better evident than in California's Dariel Fitzkee's inability to get fair consideration in the national election. *The Sphinx* magazine, although willing to publish club reports and general news, had a definite eastern slant. Believing that West Coast magic deserved a voice of its own, and with Fleming's encouragement, the *Genii* was let loose from the lamp. Under the *Genii* logo and title, the words "Pacific Coast Magic News" and "Official Organ for the Pacific Coast Association of Magicians "advertised the intent of the new publication. It did not take long for the magic world to warm to the new magazine, and it quickly came to represent not only the West Coast but also the avant-garde of magic, capturing the interest, enthusiasm, and loyalty of its most progressive advocates. A highly successful attorney, Larsen was skilled at representing causes, lost and found. He was persuasive and powerful, even sharp and barbed when necessary, and his editorials were eagerly read month after month. In *Misdirection for Magicians*, Dariel showed the kind of progressive thinking Bill Larsen was looking for. In his November 1936 editorial in *Genii*, Bill had written, "A practical man, Dariel Fitzkee. His book on misdirection should have been written years ago, but it took Fitzkee to do it." The two men spent time together at the Reno P.C.A.M. convention in July 1937, where both had performed. Larsen wrote in his August editorial, "Dariel gave me a lot of advice which I will use. I believe Fitzkee is the best informed magician in the West." They discussed the possibility of Dariel writing for *Genii*. Dariel agreed to work up some thoughts. At that convention, Dariel was elected to the board of the P.C.A.M.

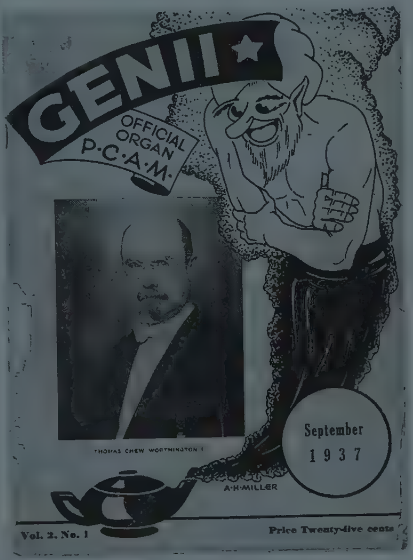
Also in early 1937, Dariel published his third book in two years, *The Strange Inventions of Dr. Ervin*, an 80-page, soft-cover book with an introduction by T. Nelson Downs, mimeographed like the others. As Dariel says in the forward, the book is essentially Dr. Erwin's, except for minor changes. "I do not deserve, nor do I expect any credit whatsoever in this book, except to have been the one persuasive and persistent enough to get Dr. Ervin to give me... the complete collection..." that appears in the book. There is an intriguing little paragraph in the foreword describing how he came to know Ervin: "It was several years ago when I was involved in one of the foolish controversies in which I have a propensity for becoming entangled." Probably this had to do with Dariel's earlier publications and the accusation of his use of other people's ideas. "Doc" Ervin wrote to Dariel at that time to express his support, initiating a friendship that extended over many years.



Fitzkee published The Strange Inventions of Dr. Ervin in 1937.

The book is a collection of around 70 clever effects, short and long. A few titles will give a good impression of what the book was about: Burned and Restored Handkerchief, One Hand Watch Production, The Egg and Lemon, Impromptu Glass Production, Rising Card From a Tumbler, and so on. Good, solid close-up and parlor tricks, still clever today, and this book, too, made it to John Mulholland's top ten list. One trick, the bill and cigarette, was a version of a trick by Ervin that appeared in an old *Sphinx* and was a precursor to an improved version that Ervin permitted Dariel to release later in the year as a single routine, "Doctor Ervin's Borrowed Bill in Cigarette," with instructions by Dariel Fitzkee. In March 1936, employed once again, Dariel had advertised *Contact Mind Reading* and *Misdirection for Magicians* in a half-page *Linking Ring* ad.

In his "Bob's This 'N That" column in the July 1937 *The Linking Ring*, Bob Weill quoted from a letter he received from Dariel explaining how he (Dariel) determined what and when to write: "I [Dariel] think price has little to do with it, if the material a book contains is really desired. My policy has been to keep completely mum unless I have something really unusual and of definite value to contribute. My own reaction is to make it of more value and to up the price." That is, Dariel decided that he would only publish what he felt was exceptional, and he would not hesitate to charge top dollar for it. And he did. Both *Misdirection for Magicians* and the Ervin book sold for $2.50 each, as had his earlier manuscripts, making them some of the most expensive items on the magic market, considering they were mimeographed manuscripts! Weill wrote, "[Dariel] has the most baffling bill in cigarette trick on the market. I know he only uses one bill and biff! Bang! It vanishes and is found in the cigarette he's been smoking in front of you all the time. It beats me and even Tom Bowyer said it was the most deucedly clever thing he's seen in ages." (And Tom Bowyer, the reviewer for *The Linking Ring*, was very hard to please.) Caryl Fleming wrote that "it can be truthfully said that to the magician who does not know the secret, Ervins' Bill in Cigarette will appear to be a miracle." The Ervin "Bill in Cigarette" manuscript went for $5.00, but did include a gimmick that enabled the trick to be done. At $5.00 it was one of the most expensive small tricks on the market in 1937. The manuscript is printed elsewhere in this issue. When he released this trick Dariel took a half page ad in both *The Sphinx* and *Genii* magazines.



Dariel's first column, titled "Thoughts are Things" appeared in the September, 1937 issue of Genii Magazine.

In the September 1937 *Genii*, Dariel formalized the thoughts he had agreed to put together as the first installment of his column "Thoughts Are Things," a 12-part monthly series. An odd title for the column, we have always thought. There is no introduction to the series; it is simply a collection of 12 articles on different topics. This initial column contains a half-page general explanation of Bob Stull's "Rising Card Trick." Bob Stull was a good friend and no doubt gave Dariel permission to write the article. While the general workings of the trick are given,

The photo at top is the one that Dariel used in his early columns in Genii Magazine. Below that is Dariel performing the Ervin Borrowed Bill in Cigarette trick at the Reno P.C.A.M. convention in 1937.

it is clear that most readers would not be able to duplicate the effect, which worked on principles of radio control – very unusual for 1937. Bob Stull was an extremely clever magical inventor from San Francisco, and many Bay Area magicians used his ideas. At the Reno P.C.A.M. convention, Assembly No 2's Steve Shepard won the Houdini Trophy by walking through a brick wall, using Stull's method. By the end of the year, Stull opened his own magic manufacturing business and many years later would invent a pocket watch faked so that, when a spectator reset it by turning the stem-wind with the case closed, the performer could reveal or predict the new setting. The "Stull Watch" would become the standard against which all other trick watches would be judged. Dariel's description of the Stull Rising Cards was reprinted in John Northern Hilliard's massive *Greater Magic*, published in 1938.

The second half of that first column described a performance of the "Walking Away From His Shadow" illusion, one of Dariel's favorites. Dariel felt the illusion was spoiled when the performer failed to use stage lighting properly. In pointing out the faults, Dariel taught lessons in stage lighting. This was to be the nature of Ftizkee's column – principles of magic illustrated by discussions of performance techniques. It quickly became a favorite of *Genii* readers.

A few of the columns deserve special note. In his February 1938 column, in writing about tailoring performances to fit one's audiences, Dariel divided audiences into nine general categories such as men at a smoker or banquet, men under lodge conditions, women only, family audiences of mixed adults and children, etc. This list of audience types was Dariel's first published "list." The "list," in fact, would become an essential part of Dariel's analytical writing style. In March, he wrote a column titled "What It Takes to Be a Modern Magician." In it, he emphasized personal qualities, such as "a sales-making personality," "definite acting ability," "a degree of refinement and good taste," to name a few. He also presented a list of "basic necessities," which were essentially card sleights. Once again, Dariel's logical analysis of "what it takes" led him to *list* "what it takes."

In his May column, he revealed an interesting vulnerability. In writing about Burling Hull, a well known magician and author who often drew critical and uncomplimentary comments, Dariel wrote: "I am in the same category. I know a lot of people don't like me. And I am frank to admit they are probably justified. I am not the citizen I should like to be." We are not certain what Dariel is referring to here. We do know that, as he achieved fame he became less tolerant of the dabbler in magic – those who called themselves ma-

Throughout the 1930s Dariel could be counted on to perform for magic club shows. The razor blade trick was one of his favorites.

gicians but who put little effort into mastering their craft and even less into polishing their performance. Perhaps the difficult years of the depression had tempered his personality, steeling him. "I've tossed my share of brick-bats in my day," he wrote. "I still don't seem to have sense enough not to when I think a brick-bat is in order." But it is also true that exceptional people draw detractors, those who are envious or who have been made to look or feel foolish, some perhaps only in their own minds, as they compare themselves with the standards Dariel set for himself or put in print, and fall short.

In the report for the August 1938, meeting of the Golden Gate Assembly, we read, "Dariel Fitzkee attempted to present Carl Brema's Steel Ball through the Brass Bolt, but his committee managed to substitute a larger steel ball, unknown to the performer..." Funny, certainly, but we are not sure how Dariel might have reacted to this. He did not enjoy being the butt of practical jokes. His comment about not being particularly well liked causes us to remember that people who are seen as a bit aloof are often targets of such pranks; sometimes their only fault is that they are successful. Was this the case here? Possibly not, but successful author, screen writer, and magician Sid Fleischman, one of the very few alive today who actually met Dariel Fitzkee, recalls the occasion of a meeting at the home of Floyd Thayer in late 1939. Several members of Los Magicos were there, and Dariel was a bit of a celebrity because he was making arrangements for his show to play Hollywood. As always, there was much laughter and good fellowship. But Sid, a teenager at the time and there as a guest of the Larsens, remembers that Dariel tended to be aloof and had little time for anyone other than the more prestigious members of the gathering. Someone slipped a raw egg into Dariel's side coat pocket, and another gave the pocket a whack, crushing the egg. A practical joke, yes; but Dariel was not amused by this sophomoric act. Obviously, the pranksters did not know Dariel Fitzkee. Although he hid it, he was greatly insulted; and the fact that he was fastidious about his person added fuel to the fire.

To those for whom he had respect and admiration, he could be warm and engaging. To those who had not achieved that status, he could be aloof and indifferent. We sense that the tolerance for others he displayed in his early involvement with the Bay Area magic clubs, which made him a popular two-term president of the Assembly, diminished over time – almost in inverse proportion to his growing reputation in magic as a logical and analytical pundit. The exception was that he always had time for young magicians who were willing and eager to learn, and daughter Marcia recalls that there always seemed to be someone downstairs talking magic and, more significantly, seeking advice. But then, it is always flattering to be sought out for advice and knowledge.

By mid-1938, Dariel had dropped his membership in the Oakland Magic Circle, but continued his activity in the Golden Gate Assembly. "A new routine for sympathetic silks was performed by Dariel Fitzkee," read one report. "He used silk flags and called it 'Diplomacy.' You can see the possibilities of this new dress for an old trick." Another report stated, "Outstanding was Dariel Fitzkee's ring trick," and in another, "Dariel Fitzkee did the diminishing cards in an entirely new way," and again, "Dariel Fitzkee can always be depended on to have something new. This time it was stretching a piece of rope." And at the Oakland Magic Circle, Golden Gate Assembly annual banquet "The best speech of the party was given by "Dariel Fitzkee." In March 1938, a single half-page ad appeared in *Genii* for Buckley's *New and Improved Card Problems*, which appears to be a reissue of the Buckley book originally published in 1930. We have never seen a copy of the Buckley book with that title, and only one ad appeared in print. We suspect that it was simply his old 1930 manuscript, *Improved and Original Card Problems,* with a slightly different title.

In his June 1938 column, Dariel explained "A New Theory on Magic Books," an article outlining how he thought magic books should be evaluated, with apologies to the magic book reviewers of the day. He proposed that the perfect book would receive a total of 1000 points made up of 150 points dedicated to the purpose of the book (technique [10], methods [20], effects [30], routines [40], and improved showmanship [50)]; 100 points for treatment (completeness [30], conciseness [20], clarity [20], development [20], and interest [20]). The value of the content in relation to price was worth up to 250 points. The product was valued at 500 points (exclusiveness or newness of material [150], distinction or importance of material [150], ingenuity of material [100], printing [50], binding [50]). To Professor Hoffman's *Modern Magic*, a classic, he would award 950 points. He thought Glenn Gravatt's and Jean Hugard's *Card Cyclopedia* a perfect 1000, and Goldston's *Exclusive Magical Secrets* a mere 450 points. The Ervin book, which he, Dariel, published with very little editing, he figured to rate 890 points, while his own *Misdirection for Magicians* he rated at 925 points. We suspect that Lloyd Jones, John Mulholland, Tom Bowyer and others simply shook their heads in wonder. It was hard enough to read a book carefully enough to give it a fair review, let along try to figure out Dariel's point system and ensure that the same standards would be (could be?) applied fairly to all books! But, if anyone could, we suppose Dariel could. This was one of those examples where Dariel set a theoretical standard against which almost all others would fail – something not likely to win, or keep, many friends. This could well account for the much of the harsh criticism Dariel received later from both Lloyd Jones and Tom Bowyer. This was especially so for Jones who was reviewing books for *Genii* at the time.

In his July editorial, Larsen writes, "One of the most valuable articles ever to appear in *Genii* is in this issue: 'Thoughts Are Things,' by Dariel Fitzkee. Every reader can profit by its reading." Dariel's topic for this column was his own "cross-reference" system. To demonstrate it, he explained that he maintained a typed list of all of his apparatus for tricks, tables, servantes, holders, etc., complete with purchase price and estimated current value. A second list itemized the tricks, apparatus, and otherwise in his repertoire. "Of course, I am referring to routined numbers," he wrote. "The number stands at present at 82." This list included every item necessary for performing each routine and the time required to perform each one. He also had two small loose-leaf binders with alphabetical in-

Another of Dariel's favorite tricks was "Walking Away from Your Shadow." He discussed the proper way to present this illusion in one of his columns. His ability to explain the theories behind his examples made him a popular author.

dices. One had a complete list of the routined tricks arranged by such classifications as "impromptu," "close-up under good conditions," "close-up under difficult conditions," etc., and the kinds of audiences for which the routines were best suited. The second notebook contained the patter for all of the routines. Dariel explained that the articles presented his system "simplified for general use." In October of the previous year, Bill Larsen had written about Dariel's system, "I don't know of any man who has a wider knowledge of magic or a greater repertoire of tricks which he can actually formulate into a new act on short notice." The detail and discipline, not to mention the time required to operate such a system, is staggering to contemplate. It does, however, lend plausibility to Dariel's theory on books mentioned above.

Dariel actually had very few magic tricks published in magazines, ever. Two of those were published that year, 1938. His substitution trunk routine, developed a few years before, was printed in the August 1938 issue of *The Sphinx*. It would also appear a few years later, in a slightly abridged form, in J.G. Thompson's book, *My Best*, one of the most popular books written in the 1940s. In his December column, Dariel published "Splat!", a card routine based on a gag suggested in an old *Sphinx* by T. Page Wright and Bill Larsen. It was a utility color-changing card effect – a trick where the face of the card changed five times.

In the meantime, a number of interesting events were occurring in the magic world. Early in 1937, the S.A.M. National Council passed a constitutional amendment that provided for four national vice presidents: West Coast, Middle West, Eastern Seaboard, and New England. (Today the Society elects nine regional vice presidents plus one for Canada and one for Japan.) At the national convention in May, Caryl Fleming was elected the West Coast Vice President. Within a few months, a number of prominent magicians, Caryl Fleming, Bill Larsen, and Chicago's Werner Dornfield among them, and several S.A.M. assemblies, had accused Julien J. Proskauer of once again exposing magic to the general public for personal gain. A headline in the January 1938 *Genii* proclaims, "Proskauer Escapes Again! Parent Assembly Dismisses Charges on Technicality." As a result of this, "Dorny" Dornfield resigned from the S.A.M., and Fleming resigned his position as

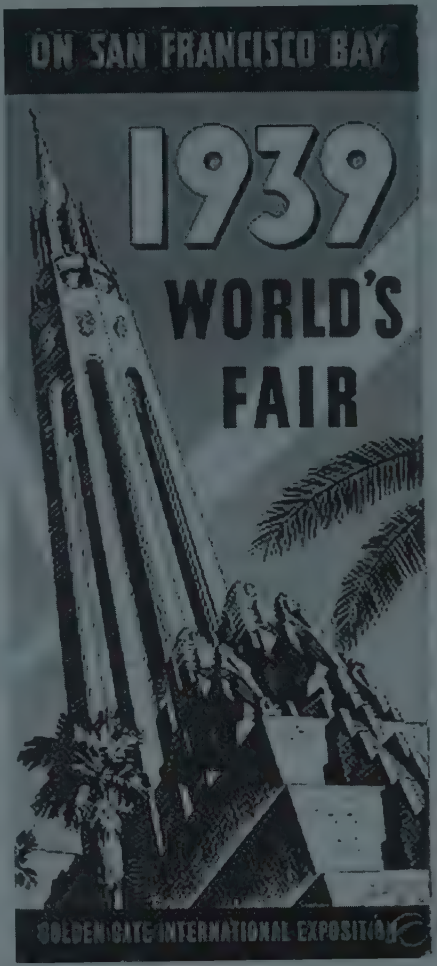
West Coast Vice President, having served less than a year.

Why do we spend so much space on Julien J. Proskauer? Magicians among our readers will find it interesting that magic organizations have always had to deal with personalities and power struggles, but, more importantly, Dariel had to navigate those political waters, both as a participant in the Society of American Magicians politics and as an author who sought fair reviews of his books. It is likely that in 1938 he was beginning to think about one day turning professional and performing in New York City. At the May 1938 S.A.M. National Convention, Dariel was elected to fill Caryl Fleming's position as West Coast Vice President. Does this mean that by his participation he condoned Proskauer's actions? Not at all. Fleming himself stated that he retained his membership in the S.A.M. to support the West Coast magic clubs, and Bill Larsen continued to be active in the S.A.M. In reporting on the election, Larsen wrote that he was glad to see fresh personalities elected to important positions, such as Leslie Guest as editor of *M.U.M.*, the S.A.M. news section that appeared in *The Sphinx*, including assembly reports. "I wager Proskauer can't muzzle him," wrote Larsen. He knew Dariel's personality and high sense of ethics. He knew that Dariel could be one more voice of reason (and logic, of course) on the National Council.

In 1938, the P.C.A.M. convention was held in San Jose, a city on the southern tip of the San Francisco Bay. Dariel was there, of course, along with his brother Dick, who had joined the S.A.M. in late 1937. Several West Coast clubs submitted proposals to host the 1939 convention, but The Golden Gate Assembly No. 2, San Francisco, was the unanimous choice. They had been working since 1935 to win that honor, suggesting to the Association that San Francisco would be a desirable choice in no small part because the city of San Francisco would host the Golden Gate International Exposition (a World's Fair) that year. The Exposition, billed as the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, was a way of celebrating the completion of three amazing WPA projects: the San Francisco – Oakland Bay Bridge, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the construction of Treasure Island, a wholly man-made island in the middle of the bay which was intended to eventually be an international airport for Pan American Clipper seaplanes. Golden Gate Assembly magicians knew that the exposition would be a great draw and from the beginning scheduled a "Magicians Day" at the Exposition the day before the official opening of the P.C.A.M. convention.

Dariel was elected First Vice President of the P.C.A.M. at the San Jose convention, a position that carried with it the responsibility for organizing the P.C.A.M. convention that would be held in that officer's home city. This Dariel was happy to do, and back in San Francisco, the Golden Gate Assembly set about organizing what they intended to be the best magic convention ever. Jimmy Muir was selected to be the General Chairman and Dariel assumed responsibility for talent, especially the big, public show, which he intended to hold in the War Memorial Opera House on the stage he had helped design seven years before. All events were scheduled for the Fairmont Hotel on Nob Hill, one of San Francisco's landmark hotels, completely reconstructed after the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906.

The Gill-Mann company for which Dariel worked was heavily involved with preparations for the Exposition, designing presentation areas for several organizations and countries. The German government was invited to participate and Dariel prepared the Gill-Mann bid to design their national pavilion. It was to be a grandiose exhibit with a large theater. Dariel's bid was accepted, in no small part because of his "pure, untainted German name," and Dariel was selected to be in charge. He actually became good friends



with the German Consul.

Germany was in the forefront of world news, of course, and in 1937 had sent 6000 "volunteer" pilots and their planes to support the Fascist Franco in the Spanish Civil War. In March 1938, Hitler invaded Austria, meeting little resistance. In September of that year, in a meeting between Adolf Hitler and British Prime Minister Nevil Chamberlain in Munich, Germany, Chamberlain agreed to the ceding of a portion of Czechoslovakia to Germany in return for Hilter's promise that there would be no more territorial demands. The persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany also reached a crisis stage in 1938, and it would not be long until Germany invaded Poland. We are sure that Dariel was greatly relieved when the Germans withdrew their intention of attending the Exposition.

One of Dariel's major responsibilities with the exposition was as technical director for the planning of the auditorium and stage on Treasure Island, and later he would be in charge of the design and construction of the acclaimed Rainbow Curtain for the stage. This auditorium would feature many popular attractions over the months of the exhibition, including swing bands led by Glenn Miller, Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Count Basie, and others, and such stars as Bob Hope and the Andrew Sisters. It would also be the scene of the Folies Bergere, and, in his capacity of technical director, Dariel saw many performances of that famous group, an experience that had a profound influence on him.

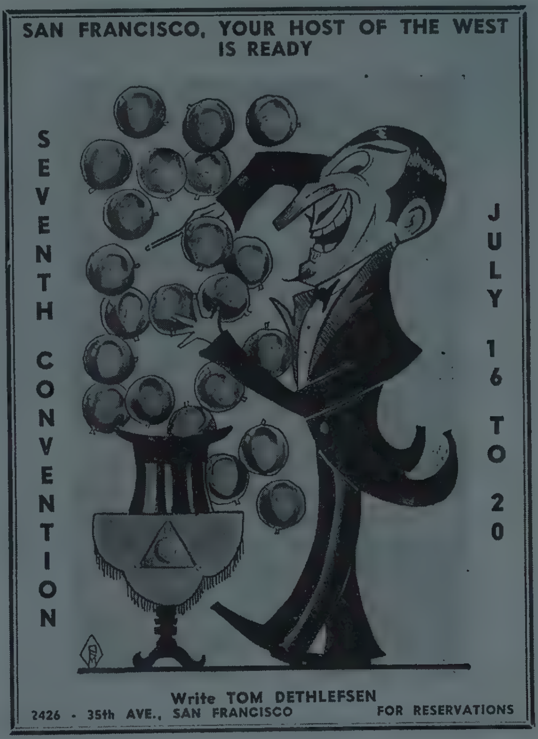
Meanwhile, Dariel's twelfth installment of "Thoughts Are Things" had appeared in the August 1938 *Genii*. The following month, he started a new series titled "Glimpses of Strange Shadows." "Starting a new book is not an easy business," he wrote. "As I write this introduction I have no more idea than you where it may lead. To my surprise some people liked 'Thoughts Are Things'." Probably the variety had a lot to do with that. It is interesting that he thinks of his new column as "starting a new book." This new series offered equal variety, touching on such topics as what to consider in developing routines, the importance of performance personality, how to consider your tricks from the spectator's viewpoint – all from a perspective of entertainment first. In the April, 1939, column, after describing professional Tommy Martin's presentation of the diminishing cards, Dariel quoted Tommy: "I was a magician once, a fellow who did tricks to fool people. The tricks I do don't fool anyone much. I don't care whether they do or not. When I stopped fooling them and started entertaining them, I began going places." Dariel added, "I think this is one of the biggest secrets in magic." Notable in this series of columns is Dariel's description of his own version of the diminishing cards and his presentation of the Okito Checker Cabinet.

Bill Larsen wrote of Dariel's contributions to *Genii*, "The material which Fitzkee gave us in volume two [of *Genii*] and is giving us here is, alone, worth much more than the cost of two years' subscription to the magazine. We only hope that, at completion, Dariel will see fit to PUBLISH IT ALL IN BOOK FORM."

In October 1939, the first installment of Dariel's third column appeared in *Genii*, "Making 'Modern Magic' Modern," a column devoted to Dariel's theories on showmanship. Of course, *Modern Magic* was the name of Hoffman's famous 19th century book. In the introduction to his first "chapter," Fitzkee wrote: "Probably the ultimate in nerve is that a guy named Fitzkee should have the temerity to write a modernized version of Hoffman's classic. But many young or short-experienced magicians make the mistake of taking the text of that glorious old work too literally...[and] there is no mistaking the 'dated' quality of much of its contents." This was a short-lived column, with "chapter two," as he called it, appearing in the November issue and "Chapters 4 – 18, inclusive" appearing on a single page in the January 1940 issue. The missing "Chapter 3" was probably scheduled for the December issue but was overlooked by Bill Larsen. In any case, we suspect that Dariel had prepared the first two installments of this material before he got fully involved in the next big chapter of his life and simply asked Bill to release him from a commitment for twelve installments.

The San Francisco P.C.A.M. convention, July 18, 19 and 20, 1939, was a huge success, with well over 300 registrants. The Sunday preceding the actual convention was Magician's Day at the Exposition; and many of the exhibits had magic as a part of their shows, such as the "Demon of Doom" illusion at the Chinese Village, the "cross escape at Sally Rand's Nude Ranch" (you read that correctly), the guillotine, Linking Rings, and other features in front of other pavilions – even a "Headless Woman" sideshow illusion that warranted a second visit. The next day, magicians who wished to do so participated in a visit to the Shrine Hospital for Crippled Children, bringing a bit of happiness to the unfortunate. Tuesday was the official opening of the convention at the Fairmont Hotel with activities scheduled Tuesday through Thursday. But the big event was the "Million Dollar Show" at the War Memorial Opera House. The *Sphinx* review read, "Wednesday will always be known as a historical day in San Francisco.... It was the first time a magician ever performed on the stage of the War Memorial Opera House." With a sold-out house of nearly 3,500, and some 500 more turned away, "This was what we believe to be the most successful magical show ever produced in this country!" Dariel must have been justly proud as once again "the beautiful gold brocade curtain of seeming wrought gold billowed upward, like receding waves on a vertical beach."

"On the bill were some of the swellest acts in magic," continued the review. Bill Allstrand; Bert Allerton with his famous cow; Charlie Smith and the dancing handkerchief; The Ushers and their exceptional mental act; and, closing the first half, one of the most unique acts ever to play a magic show, Tenkai and the Southern California Japanese Amateur Magicians Club, who performed in costume with their own settings. The emcee was Jim Sherman, aided occasionally by Bert Kalmer. "The audience liked 'em both," reported *Genii*, "particularly Sherman's announcement that Hitler had given the world 'three weeks to get out'." The second half opened with Señor Maldo, who brought down the house with the six-card repeat and was brought back for an encore, doubling his 15 minutes. He was followed by Clarence Slyter with one of magic's best acts and then by Bill Larsen's wife, Gerrie, in a costumed act with silks and flowers. Tenkai and Okinu followed with manipulations and productions, and the show closed with San Francisco's Steve Shepard, who walked through a brick wall and floated a beautiful lady who then vanished in mid air. Dariel had his own ideas on how a show should be staged and gave considerable thought to the placement of acts and the kind of magic he wanted performed at various stages of the show.



SAN FRANCISCO, YOUR HOST OF THE WEST IS READY

SEVENTH CONVENTION

JULY 16 TO 20

Write TOM DETHLEFSEN
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The 1939 P.C.A.M. convention was probably one of the most successful West Coast conventions of all time. Dariel was in charge of talent and produced the major shows.

The San Francisco magicians were elated. According to Bill Larsen, "There was dancing, magic, and a very loud beer-powered barroom quartette with Dick Fitzkee, Dariel's brother, serving as the conductor." There was even "a wrestling match between Dariel and Jim Muir, both of whom were cold sober – believe it or not. It is rumored that Fitzkee took Muir so completely that Muir had to go home for liniment right afterwards." It was definitely a Fitzkee event. In addition to Dariel's arrangement of talent, brother Dick was in charge of the contests and was acclaimed as an all-around asset; and wife Marcia, with Elsie Dethlefsen, provided the most elaborate ladies' activities that any of the conventioneers could remember. In every respect this was the best P.C.A.M. convention yet and was the equal of any other magic convention held anywhere to that date.

It had been a momentous decade for Dariel Fitzkee, filled with successes and setbacks. His career in the theatrical supplies industry had been sidetracked by the Great Depression. He had been forced to withdraw his bid for the national presidency of The Society of American Magicians, but in retrospect that was probably for the best, for he had gone on to achieve national prominence not only for his magic books but also for his columns in *Genii* magazine. He was among the very few in magic who climbed above the maudlin emotionalism that had kept magic in the 19th century. He was capable of analyzing magic and magicians, of emphasizing in a clear and logical manner what was required to lift magic once again to the top of the entertainment ladder. Bill Larsen had called him the most knowledgeable man in magic, and great many people agreed with him, perhaps including Dariel.

Chapter 11

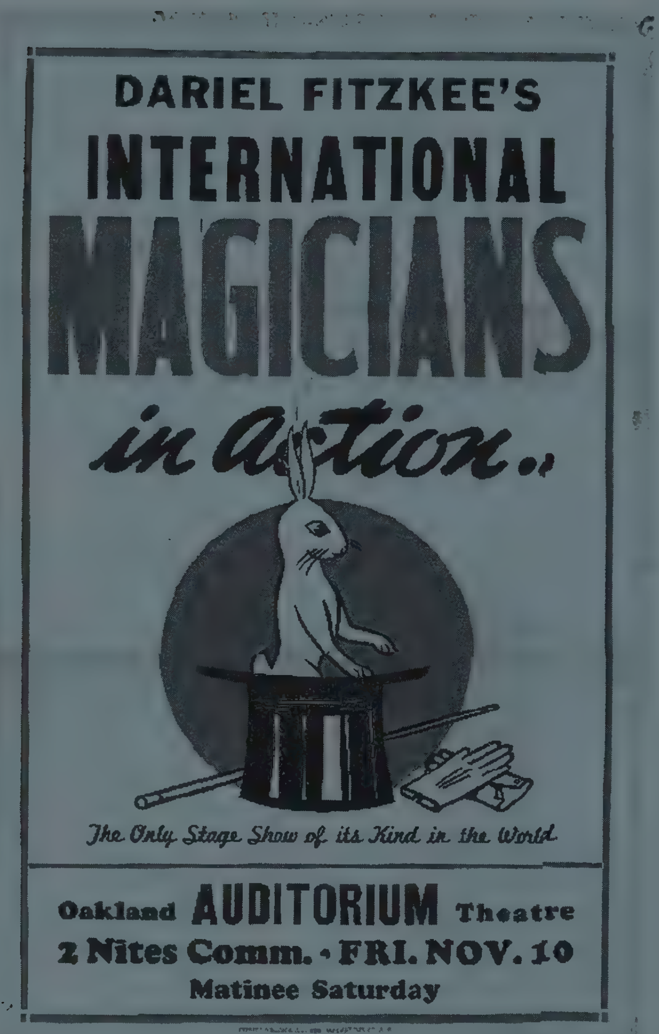
International Magicians in Action

For some time, Dariel had formulated a hypothesis about magic and showmanship, briefly alluded to in his *Genii* columns, but which he had never tested. It required a great experiment on a grand stage. The P.C.A.M. public show provided Dariel his opportunity to see if his thinking was correct. It paid off, for the show was a smash! At the end of the convention, Dariel and Marcia sat down with Donna and Jimmy Eyster; Caro Miller, who had been the music director for the show, and his wife, Lynn; Clarence Slyter; Señor Maldo; and Jimmy Muir. "We just put on the best magic show ever staged by a convention," he might have told them, "and probably the best magic show there ever was. Why? Because it was fast paced, smart, and modern. It filled a 3,500-seat auditorium, which proves that such a show can draw a box office; and the crowd went away happy. Think about it; the show had music in Gerrie Larsen's act; it had an international flair with Maldo and Tenkai; it had comedy with Slyter's hilarious drunk act; it had mentalism with the Ushers; it had small magic; and it had illusions with Shepard's Asrah and his walking through a wall.

Dariel would have continued excitedly. "I have in mind a show that would combine all of those elements and improve upon them. How many of you went to Clifford Fischer's Follies Bergere? His formula is considered perhaps the fastest, most entertaining and most sweeping in the world. I saw that show dozens of times while we were preparing it for the Treasure Island theater. I think we can put on a show like the Folies Bergere, only with magic instead of showgirls. It will be a revue. We'll open to a swank bar scene and any drink called for, some of the script will be lyrical, some simply lines.... Jimmy, you will appear several times throughout the show providing lots of comedy. I will do the guillotine and the Walking Away from My Shadow to provide some illusions. Marcia can assist me and some of the others. Donna and Jimmy, you two are every bit as good as the Ushers. I heard Bill Larsen say that there were many who could take lessons from you two. Caro, your Vibraharp will provide some balance to the magic, and we'll get Ming to be our Oriental act. Maldo, you knocked 'em dead the other night. You can do the same with us. I saw Lucille Hughes at the Golden Gate Theater not long ago. She's a knockout and a swell magician. We'll see if she's interested and pick up a couple of other acts I have in mind. We'll end the first and second halves of the show with something never seen before. We'll have a dozen magicians on stage doing magic all at once. It will be our version of a chorus line. This will be a great show! Marcia and I are willing to give up everything," he might have said. "Our daughter Marcia can stay with her grandparents. We'll start here in San Francisco, then head south and across country. I think we can take this show to Broadway!"

The "Golden Age of Magic" is often thought of as the 1920s and 1930s. Howard Thurston had been the master magician of that era, the successor to the old dean, Harry Kellar. Thurston's last show was in October, 1935, and he died a few months later at age 67. The format of his show was tried and proven. Thurston, the Master Magician, presented illusion magic in several scenes, complete with elaborate scenery and several assistants. The two leading illusionists of the late 1930s were Harry Blackstone and Dante, both of whom had shows not unlike Thurston's. Dariel Fitzkee knew Harry Blackstone well, had seen his show several times, and had hosted Blackstone and his wife in his home whenever they played San Francisco. "Blackstone and His Show of 1001 Wonders" opened with "The Enchanted Garden," a fast-moving production sequence that included doves, silks, flowers and more flowers, and several beautifully gowned assistants. While the stage was reset, Blackstone performed a dancing handkerchief sequence, then an illusion routine in Chinese costume. Once again, as the stage was reset, Blackstone performed in front of the second curtain, this time doing one of his signature pieces, the floating light bulb that would actually float out over the audience. This alternation of working in front of the curtains and then full stage with lavish settings continued throughout the show. "The Mystery of Delhi," for example, was a routine based on the Sepoy Mutiny in India in which a person was lashed to a cannon only to be miraculously unhurt when the cannon was fired. Blackstone also performed his famous Buzz Saw illusion, with its frightful noise and evil-looking giant circular blade that appeared to slice through a lady assistant, as well as his "The United Nations of Dolls" production illusion designed to show off his beautiful assistants (he was sometimes called the Zigfield of Magic). Blackstone's other illusions included "The Girl Without a Middle," "The Levitation of Princess Karnac," and vanishing a full-grown horse on stage. The show ran over two and one-half hours. This was the "Blackstone Show." He was the only star, and his personality permeated all the action.

Dariel did meet Dante, but only late in Dante's career, in the fall of 1940. Dante's "Sim Sala Bim" show was back from Europe and played Broadway in September then went on to play other dates before closing in Detroit. The opening sequence of his show was billed as "10 Surprises in 10 Seconds," with the production of doves, silks, and flowers. An empty, book-like cabinet suddenly filled with ducks and a goat. Donning an artist's smock and beret, Dante placed a papier-mâché head on the top of a tripod of poles and then draped a gown around the tripod, creating a doll-like figure that immediately came to life. He favored transposition illusions like "The Great Triple Mystery," in which the beautiful Moi-Yo Miller disappeared from inside a cloth bag placed inside a locked trunk, switching places with a girl assistant who had mysteriously just appeared beside the trunk. The second half of Dante's show opened with Dante and assistants dressed in authentic, gorgeous embroidered Chinese robes, presenting Selbit's "Crushing A Woman" illusion, followed by his famous comedy piece, the "Backstage with the Magician" illusion, and then the "Cabinet of Death" black-art illusion, another signature piece. His show also included Dante's original "Phantom Princess," a classical "floating" illusion. To conclude, Dante produced Moi-Yo Miller from a cabinet previously shown empty and placed her inside a second box, from which she vanished. Lowering a third box, which had been suspended from the ceiling throughout the whole show, Dante opened it and produced the beautiful Moi-Yo.



DARIEL FITZKEE'S
INTERNATIONAL
MAGICIANS
in Action..

The Only Stage Show of its Kind in the World

Oakland AUDITORIUM Theatre
2 Nites Comm. • FRI. NOV. 10
Matinee Saturday

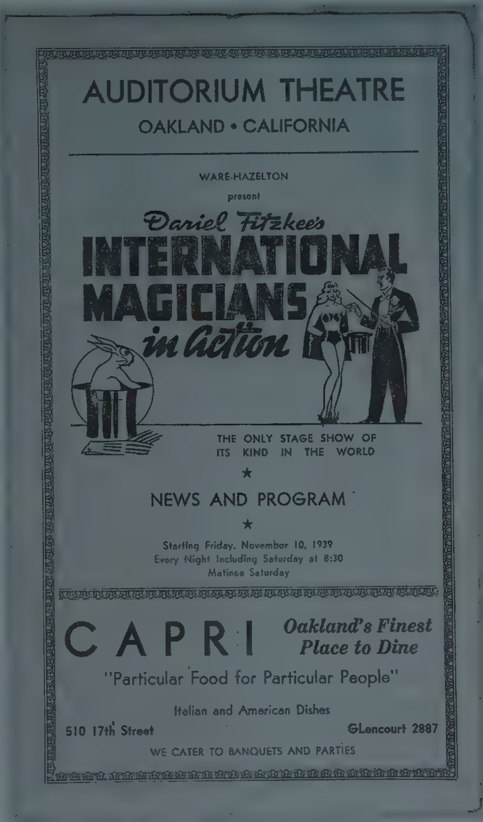
Both the "Blackstone Show of 1001 Wonders" and Dante's "Sim Sala Bim" were accompanied by classical music. In both of them, the "master magician" progressed through the show, from one box trick to the next, giving the audience nothing new except a change of costume. Furthermore, both Blackstone and Dante were nearing the ends of their careers. While magicians revered them, Dariel felt that in the eyes of the audience, they were as old as their magic!

Dariel's opinion was that the public had tired of "golden age" magic. The content of the Blackstone show and the Dante show were obviously similar in several respects, and in fact they were really not that different in overall effect from the shows of Kellar, Houdini, Thurston, and even Herrmann at the turn of the century. What the public wanted was "modern magic." The success of vaudeville had been based on variety. Admittedly vaudeville was on the wane, but the concept was still sound. The show Dariel had arranged for the P.C.A.M. convention was a kind of vaudeville show where all the acts were magic. Usually this is seen only when magicians put on a show for other magicians and invite the general public as an afterthought or to raise funds to cover expenses. But the sold-out Opera House, all-magic show proved to Dariel that the public would respond to a show that featured modern, smart magic and modern, smart music and that emphasized showmanship!

"Caro, you were born in Australia, and Lynn, you in New York City," Dariel might have said. "We'll bill you as 'from Australia and New York.' Jimmy and Donna, you are from Canada. Slyter, you are from England. Tolmack, you are from Jugo-Slavia– I don't care, that's how we'll spell it. We'll say that Lucille is from Sweden. Ming will obviously be from China. Maldo, you are from Mexico. Maybe we'll get a singer from Ireland. Muir, you are from 'everywhere,' and I'll bill myself as 'from right here.' We'll call the show *International Magicians in Action.* We can't miss.

"Marcia and I will put everything we have into the show," Dariel would have pledged. Did he ask the others to contribute financially? We do not know. He would have explained that the risk was minimal, since they were starting in their own back yard. If the show didn't work they could just close it down. He did ask them to commit to giving the show a fair try, to rehearse long and hard. They obviously agreed to the idea, and we suspect they were enthusiastic about their prospects. After all, they had seen the audience response at the Opera House. Did he go to friends, family, magicians in the Golden Gate Assembly seeking investors? In his column in the December 1939 *Tops* magazine, published by the Abbott Magic Company but sent throughout the nation to a large subscriber list, Lloyd Jones wrote that Dariel had obtained "good backing" for the show. We don't know the details, but it did require capital to initiate such a show. Dariel found a church in San Francisco that was willing to let them use a back room for rehearsals, and they began.

Their primary opening was scheduled for the Curran Theater in downtown San Francisco on Sunday night November 26, 1939. In preparation for that, Dariel arranged for the show to play warm-up performances at the White Theater in Fresno on November 6 and 7, at the Sacramento Memorial Auditorium on November 8, at the San Jose Civic Auditorium on November 9 and at the Oakland Auditorium Theater on November 10 and 11 so that adjustments and improvements could be made for the opening in San Francisco. Dariel was busy drumming up publicity and arranging interviews and charity appearances by some of the cast at the Santa Clara County Hospital and by others at the San Jose Home for Children. Several newspaper interviews with Dariel "acknowledged [him] as one of the greatest living authorities on modern magic," and the *Alameda Times-Star* reported that "In his home in New York, Dariel had a library of some sixteen hundred volumes on magic alone, from which he has received many of the ideas that have made his *International Magicians in Action* so radically different from the usual show of its kind" and that the acts were "prize winning professional magicians, each one a specialist." The publicity paid off, even if the veracity was stretched slightly, for good crowds attended the shows.



AUDITORIUM THEATRE
OAKLAND • CALIFORNIA

WARE-HAZELTON
present
Dariel Fitzkee's
INTERNATIONAL
MAGICIANS
in Action

THE ONLY STAGE SHOW OF
ITS KIND IN THE WORLD

★

NEWS AND PROGRAM

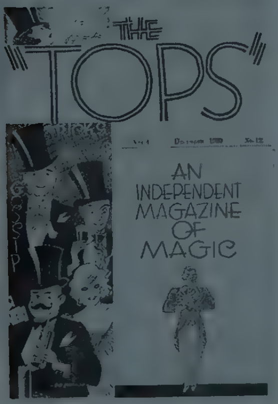
★

Starting Friday, November 10, 1939
Every Night Including Saturday at 8:30
Matinee Saturday

CAPRI Oakland's Finest Place to Dine
"Particular Food for Particular People"
Italian and American Dishes
510 17th Street GLencourt 2887
WE CATER TO BANQUETS AND PARTIES

The Oakland Auditorium program.

Newspapers such as *The Fresno Bee*, the *Alameda Times-Star*, the *Oakland Tribune*, the *San Jose Evening News*, and many others ran the interviews, along with photographs and then reviews. "Everything in the place disappeared last night," Karl Kidder wrote in *The Bee*, "...as a wide eyed audience murmured: 'It can't be done!'" "Pennies from Heaven – that isn't the half of it!" wrote the *San Jose Mercury-Herald*. "The audience of last evening's magical exhibition at the civic auditorium looked on in awe as each magician outdid his predecessor." Wood Soanes of the *Oakland Tribune* was a bit more realistic and practical in his review: "While [the show] is still in a formative stage and needs a generous dose of showmanship to make it topnotch entertainment, it has all of the necessary ingredients for popular success.... Rearranged and revised, the show of the International Magicians should go places. It was quite evident from the Auditorium turnout that there is a waiting audience for this type of show."



The first review to appear in a magic magazine was by Lloyd Jones in the December 1939 *Tops* magazine and carried over to the next month by the editor, Percy Abbott. Lloyd, from Oak-

Lloyd Jones published a scathing review in The Tops magazine.

land, was a past president of the Oakland Magic Circle, and the founding president of the P.C.A.M. While he had known Dariel for many years, and they were acquaintances, there was no sense of real friendship. In fact, there was obvious competition between the two, considering they were somewhat close in age, both quite knowledgeable, both capable performers, and both often involved in Bay Area magic events together. Jones was very critical of the show, with comments like: "[Opening remarks] were too long and only partly saved by a paper bouquet opening." "Tolmack handled card fans and billiard balls well.... Then he spoiled his act by doing an acrobatic tap-dance routine." Regarding a paper-tearing stunt by all the members of the cast, he wrote, "Here again a little showmanship would have clicked the routine."

It is difficult to read Jones's critique of Dariel as anything other than a personal attack: "Dariel Fitzkee next presented the guillotine staged in dramatic fashion but with a pitiful lack of showmanship and a finish lower than the basement floor." And later, "Fitzkee now returned to spoil a good trick, the Walking Away from Your Shadow, by a flat presentation in which patter seemed ad-libbed and the shadow faded as soon as the light switch was made." "The entire bill would be improved if Fitzkee would devote his time to improving [the show] instead of performing himself." Ouch! Nor was he about to let Dariel's newspaper interviews pass without comment: "Newspaper publicity was plentiful with lots of photographs," he wrote, "but instead of building up what was to be seen on the show the blurbs told of the reputation of the performers, their libraries, etc." This was an obvious reference to what Dariel had said about himself. Jones did say that, if certain changes were made, it was hoped "the entire show clicks in a manner that will send it across state lines and bring packed houses."

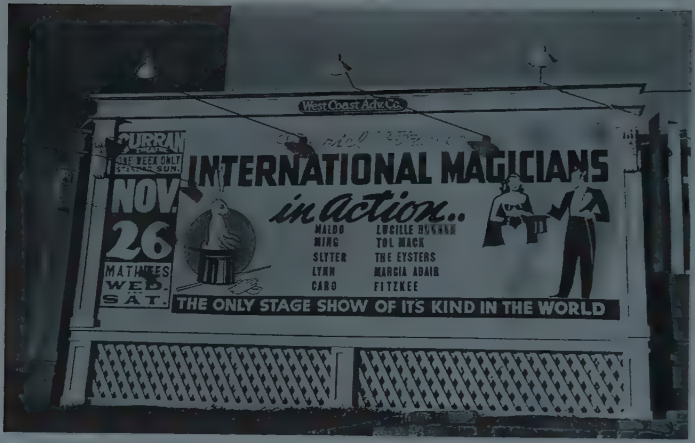
While Lloyd Jones was a clever and entertaining performer and would become a successful magic book dealer and write book reviews for *Tops* and *Genii* magazines throughout much of his life, he was opinionated and often tactless in his remarks. There are those who said of Jones that he was sometimes jealous or envious of others' success and could not resist saying or writing something that would diminish that success. Such envy appears to be the case here. Furthermore, Jones was not content to simply give the show a bad review. Throughout his article he continually made suggestions for changes and additions that he felt would improve the show – suggestions that were presumptuous and symptomatic of his own powerful ego.

To his credit, Percy Abbott sent Dariel the full text of Jones's review and provided Dariel the opportunity to rebut Jones in the very next issue of *Tops,* so that Dariel's rebuttal could appear in the same issue in which the bulk of Jones's review – and the most scathing part – appeared. Dariel, whose ego, although bruised, was equal to and perhaps even a notch above that of Jones's, was quick to respond: "It has been called to my attention that a druggist, an amateur magician totally without professional theatrical experience, either as a reviewer or performer, has started a serial review of my *International Magicians in Action.*" Dariel went on to quote positive reviews from the four major San Francisco newspapers. "Obviously, these opinions are IMPORTANT. Whereas the ones expressed in the drug store notes, like patent medicine testimonials, might have a purpose other than honest criticism." What purpose might that be? Dariel suggests that the reader consider Jones's review alongside the positive comments of professional reviewers and decide which to believe. "The numerous personal cracks he has taken at me through the columns of *Tops* don't bother me a bit – he might even be right," Dariel writes. Then he apologizes to Percy, stating that he can't just sit by and let Jones pan "this swell show... and the nice bunch of people associated with [it]... just because he doesn't like my insides personally."

Bill Larsen wasted no time in taking up for Dariel and the show. In the December 1939 *Genii* he wrote, "Bouquets to Dariel Fitzkee. Who else would have the nerve to stage a full evening show comprised of a dozen magicians in these times. And, moreover, we understand he's doing well at it." In his editorial in the January issue, Larsen wrote, "I have it on good authority that it [the show] is one of the most acceptable and well staged magic shows ever to be seen on the American stage. It is unfortunate that Lloyd Jones had to express such unnecessary criticism of the venture. I wonder if Jones could do better?" Jones would probably say, as many in magic have said over the years, that the magic press too often prints whitewashed reviews and that he was simply trying to be objective and accurate. In the previous issue of *Genii*, Claude Burke, of the Oakland Magic Circle, referred to the show as being "magic presented in a new manner." He was not glowing in his comments, simply matter of fact, and he likely saw the need for improvement that one would expect from a new show. In that same issue, Bob Stull, of San Francisco, said, "I saw the show and it is a dandy. With a few rough edges removed it should be an absolute hit. Don't miss it."

Jones was stung by Dariel's response, and his retort in the February *Tops* was sharp. "He asked for it," wrote Jones, "so let's dish out a few pills for him." He pointed out that the IMPORTANT reviews (that Fitzkee quoted) were actually of the Curran show, not the one Jones had seen two weeks before. Naturally it would have been improved, Jones explained, since after that Oakland show "Dariel Fitzkee's *International Magicians in Action* went into two weeks of intensive rehearsal, and, under the direction of a professional director... who, incidentally, made some of the changes I suggested." Jones's article then drew from reviews of performances prior to the Curran, namely those at Sacramento and Oakland, to emphasize the accuracy of his own review. Indeed, the first half of Jones's article is focused on validating his review of the Oakland show, and he emphasized that he had stated in that review that the show showed promise. It was personal, though, and Jones's words drip with sarcasm, referring to Dariel as "...the imminent International Authority Mr. Dariel Fitzkee...." Then he touched on the real issue: "So what then is the key to the fits of Mr. Fitzkee? In my personal opinion it is that even an International Magical Authority cannot step on the stage over night and be as good as the professionals who have been working steadily. Hence my suggestion that he step out of the picture and become the stager and director for which he has a flair and which his ensemble numbers showed needed his attention." To emphasize his opinion of Dariel's performance ability, Jones pointed out that two of the four reviewers quoted by Dariel did not even mention Dariel at all!

It was personal. Jones had insulted Dariel in print, referring to his "pitiful lack of showmanship... a finish lower than the basement floor," and "Fitzkee now returned to spoil a good trick." While Jones was not that harsh on any of the other principles in the show, he would have explained, if asked, that Dariel was the only amateur of the group. What he might not have said was that several of the others were his personal friends. Of course, Dariel fired back with both barrels, insulting Jones in turn, calling him a druggist and an amateur – which fell short of the vitriolic commentary Jones had written. Jones suggested that, when Dariel and the *International Magicians* played southern California, Dariel



Dariel advertised the show on San Francisco billboards.

would find at least "ONE critic who will not be as merciful as I have been but will take him to one side and say, 'Dariel you ---'." "----"? That probably meant, "Dariel, you stink!"

Jones tipped his hand at the conclusion of his rebuttal article, titled, by the way, "Jones Burps Back!" (We wonder if that was his title or if Percy Abbott considered it an apt description.) In this article Jones wrote a diatribe on Dariel's publications: "If you are still wondering why I am prejudiced against Mr. Fitzkee..." – at last a confession. – "...let me call to your attention the fact that the man wrote a book on Contact Mindreading yet none of his magical friends ever saw him do any." (But we have noted a newspaper report of him doing so.) "That he wrote a book on Rope Tricks and like his other books took the material from others." And Jones made negative comments about Dariel's books on showmanship and the linking rings and jumbo cards. Jones continued, "That he published a new theory on book reviewing (Genii, June 1938) and had the colossal conceit to give his own books a higher rating than *Latest Magic, Expert Billiard Ball Manipulation, Magic of the Hands, Exclusive Magical Secrets,* etc. And that is why I don't like Mr. Fitzkee, his colossal conceit grates on the delicate sensibilities of this prescription reader." There you have it. Jealousy raised its ugly head. And that is a shame. Had Jones not allowed his jealousy of Dariel Fitzkee to affect his review, it could have given a very honest and constructive review; indeed, those first performances were very rough and the show did need work. Dariel was the one performer with the least experience and was probably the weakest of them all at that point. Furthermore, he was probably blind to some of his own shortcomings. However, that "ONE" critic in southern California did not materialize. The reviews there were very strong, as we shall see, and Dariel did take direction well and improve to become a very competent and entertaining part of the show. It is likely that Jones was surprised by the critical reception the show received in southern California, and possibly a little disappointed. It is human nature to want your enemies to fail.

In response to Jones's complaint to Bill Larsen that his critical review had been about the Oakland show, not the San Francisco show, Bill chided Jones for being so harsh when reviewing what were obviously shows designed to work through and correct weaknesses, and that the appropriate thing would have been to wait until the kinks had been worked out before reviewing it – especially since he was certainly aware that the show was scheduled for San Francisco.

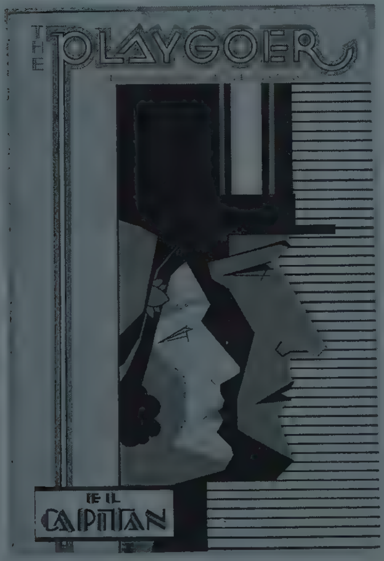
After the Oakland show, Dariel and his magicians had two weeks to get ready for the Curran Theater in San Francisco. To his credit, as has been mentioned, Dariel recognized that he needed outside theatrical advice, and those two weeks were spent tightening up the show properly.

The sequence of the show was changed around some. Where Dariel's guillotine routine had been immediately followed by his razor blades trick, the guillotine was moved into the first half of the show, and the razor blades became the second act in the second half.

The Curran Theatre was one of San Francisco's finest theatres. The show was a success and was invited back, an invitation Dariel was unable to accept.

Dariel took to heart the *Tribune* critique suggesting the need for a strong illusion and dropped his "Walking Away From His Shadow," a favorite of his but just not strong enough for the show, and substituted the Waller transposition illusion, "Murder In a Telephone Booth," which used Fitzkee, Caro, Lynn, Tolmack, Eyster, and Slyter, making it a strong number.

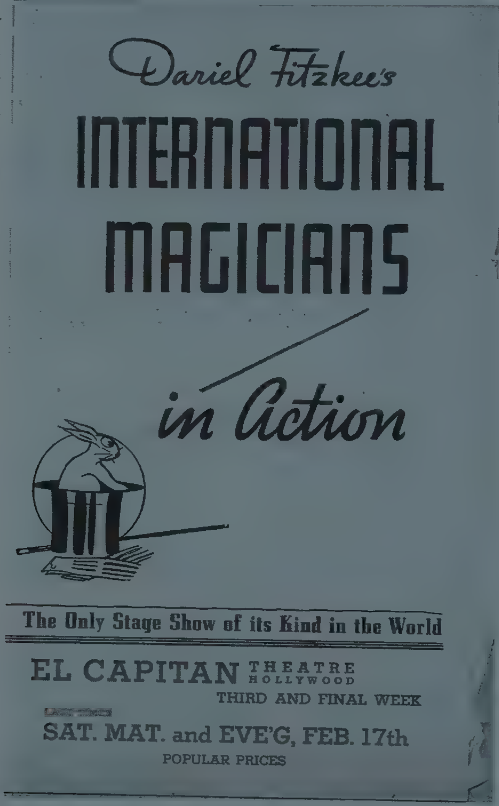
On November 27, they opened for a week at the Curran, one of the city's oldest and most prestigious theaters. The press responded warmly: "The entertainment they provide is top-notch trickery... being fooled by them is a genuine pleasure ... they are all good." – *San Francisco Chronicle.* "Twenty acts which a first night audience thoroughly enjoyed." – *San Francisco Examiner.* The *San Francisco News* used a seven-column heading to say, "Magicians In Numbers Thoroughly Mystify The Curran Audience." The critic for that newspaper said, "Enthusiastic audience... the show was paced like a revue. What was even more fun, the entire troupe would suddenly leap over the footlights into the audience and go into action." (This latter comment refers to all the cast performing the miser's dream down among the audience members, something Jones said he and magicians in the Oakland audience laughed at.) Finally, under the headline "Magicians Of World Unite In Novel Show," the *San Francisco Call-Bulletin* critic wrote, "When twelve of them put on a finale, as they did at the Curran Theater last night, the total trickery is stupendous.... This unique and entertaining show has vaudeville, melodrama, comedy, sex appeal. When they descend into the audience and begin filling hats with half-dollars out of midair, you wonder why anyone ever bothered with Ham and Eggs." In short, the four top entertainment critics in San Francisco loved the show! A few months later in a letter to Dariel encouraging him to bring the show back to San Francisco, Homer Curran, owner of the Curran Theater, wrote, "When you consider that on its first engagement you opened to $500.00 and jumped to over $2,000.00 on Saturday, due to the very favorable press and audience reaction, it means that unquestionably there is more business in San Francisco for you." Dariel and the show were playing Salt Lake City at the time and were on their way to Chicago. "Should you return to the Coast," wrote Curran, "I should be very happy to try and work out a deal for you for another engagement."



Although the show was an unqualified success, they did not have another booking until the end of January, 1940, when the troupe went to southern California to open for two weeks at the El Capitan Theatre in Hollywood. We do not know if this was by design in order

EL CAPITAN
POCAHONTAS
COOLED BY REFRIGERATION

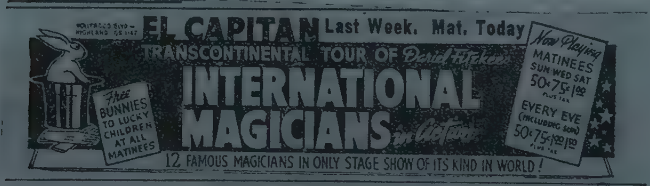
The success of the show in southern California must have exceeded Dariel's wildest expectations. They were held over for a third week at the El Capitan. On this page, along with memorabilia from the show, is a curent photo of the marquee of the El Capitan, which still captures the flavor of the ornate theater 60 years after the show.



Dariel Fitzkee's
INTERNATIONAL
MAGICIANS
in Action

The Only Stage Show of its Kind in the World

EL CAPITAN THEATRE HOLLYWOOD
THIRD AND FINAL WEEK
SAT. MAT. and EVE'G, FEB. 17th
POPULAR PRICES



EL CAPITAN Last Week. Mat. Today
TRANSCONTINENTAL TOUR OF Dariel Fitzkee's
INTERNATIONAL
MAGICIANS in Action
Free BUNNIES TO LUCKY CHILDREN AT ALL MATINEES
Now Playing
MATINEES SUN WED SAT 50¢ 75¢ 1.00 PLUS TAX
EVERY EVE (INCLUDING SUN) 50¢ 75¢ 1.00 1.50 PLUS TAX
12 FAMOUS MAGICIANS IN ONLY STAGE SHOW OF ITS KIND IN WORLD!

for cast members to arrange affairs for what they hoped would be a transcontinental tour or if bookings were just hard to come by. Jimmy Muir, a popular and talented comedy magician from Oakland, who had been unable to be a part of the show until then, added a strong comedic element to the show. Bill Larsen saw the show for the first time and wrote a full-page review in the March 1940 *Genii*: "In this amazing two hour and a half show we have the greatest step forward in magic that has been made since Robert Houdin kicked hidden assistants out of conjuring table tops. The performance is strictly in tune with everything that is up to date. Dariel Fitzkee has made magic palatable even to those who 'simply loathe tricks, my dear.'.... The show closes with all twelve magicians working different tricks at the same time. By the time the curtain goes down the stage is full of silks, flowers, fish bowls, flower baskets, ducks, chickens and, in the midst of all, Lucille attired as a rabbit taking a man out of a hat.... Dariel Fitzkee, and every single member of your troupe, we, *Genii*, salute you!"

Leo Simon, stage and screen critic for the *Evening News*, wrote, "Nothing short of magic could account for the capacity attendance at El Capitan Theater yesterday afternoon... but the folks who brought the kiddies down to the opening matinee of Dariel Fitzkee's *International Magicians* had no regrets... for they had the pleasure of witnessing the most entertaining magic show ever presented on any stage. ...it is more than hocus pocus that gives the show its high entertainment quality. Fitzkee, or whoever else responsible for its organization and production, has endowed it with the smartness and lightning like pace of a 'Folies Bergere.' None of the essentials of theatrical showmanship is neglected."

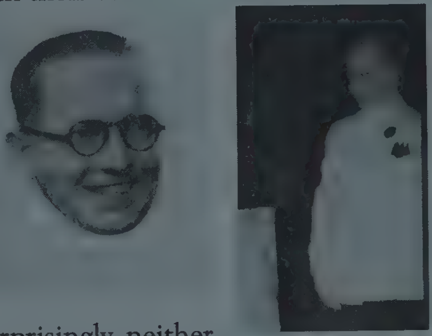
Dariel was elated when he read that review. "Folies Bergere!" He had never met Leo Simon. They had never talked about the fact that Dariel had built his show on the model of the Folies Bergere. That in his superlative review Simon had singled out the similarity validated everything Dariel was trying to do!

The Greatest Show of Its Time

Dariel Fitzkee would become famous for the books he wrote, while his full-evening show, *International Magicians in Action*, would be forgotten. This was partly because the show actually played very few venues, but also because of the elitist attitude of the "establishment" magicians in the East, including those who booked magicians for conventions and assembly banquets. And yet it is possible that Dariel's show was the best full-evening magic show of its time, especially from the point of view of entertaining the general public.

Each performer in the show was excellent, as good as or better than most magicians who appeared regularly at the national conventions. However, they were primarily from the western states, and many of them were part-time professionals. While they were fixtures in the P.C.A.M. shows of the late thirties and early forties, and were often highlight acts for magic club banquets in the northwestern states and western Canada, they never achieved national prominence and rarely, if ever, played national conventions in the East. Despite strong reviews of P.C.A.M. convention shows later, notwithstanding the *International Magicians* show that played the Curran and El Capitan, these performers were pretty much ignored. It was as if magicians in the East could not believe that the West was capable of producing "real" magicians of a caliber to compare with their own.

In addition to being victims of this elitist attitude, the cast of the *International Magicians* show, like Dariel, were also victims of fate in the form of The Great Depression and then World War II, which severely limited opportunities for most West Coast magicians to attain national recognition. The histories by Christopher, Waters, Booth, and others hardly acknowledge them as individuals, with the exception of Caro Miller, Señor Maldo and Clarence Slyter. Fitzkee is listed, but not as a performer. Surprisingly, neither Dariel Fitzkee nor the *International Magicians in Action* show are even mentioned in Price's monumental *Magic*. And while Fitzkee is listed in Bart Whaley's *Who's Who in Magic*, the emphasis is placed on Fitzkee's books, as it should be, with the added comment: "Toured an unsuccessful full-evening show1939-40." In fact, vry few magicians living today, prior to the publication of this book, even knew that Dariel Fitzkee produced one of the best magic shows of the twentieth century! The *International Magicians in Action* show, therefore, deserves a thorough treatment in this book because it is one of the lost gems of twentieth century magic.


Jimmy Muir

Jimmy Muir, a Bay Area personality of great wit and talent, was by day the manager of one of Oakland's prosperous hotels. He was also a favorite emcee for magical and non-magical events alike, and his repertoire contained a great many sight gags and vaudeville bits that were guaranteed crowd-pleasers. In one of them, Jimmy played a soulful tune on the musical saw, so sad that he wept noisily while playing it. It is hard to appreciate that kind of broad humor on stage today, but in 1940 it was delightfully received. Jimmy provided comedy highlights throughout the show and served to tie the show together.

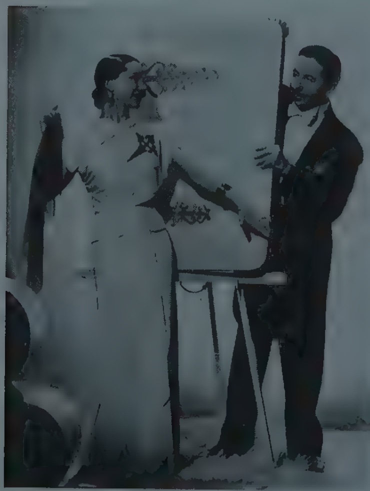
Caro and Lynn Miller, a husband-and-wife team from the Bay Area, provided variety for the show. He was slender and handsome and she was a striking, long-legged blond.

Caro & Lynn Miller

To fit the theme, Dariel promoted Caro as being from Australia and Lynn from New York. Caro was a smooth and competent magician, skilled at sleight-of-hand, and also an excellent musician on the vibraharp, or vibraphone, a very popular instrument in the thirties and forties, especially in jazz music. Somewhat like the xylophone, the vibraharp also had a sustain pedal, like on a piano, so that notes could be either damped or sustained. Caro often served as the variety act on magic shows. His wife, Lynn, had a very nice Chautauqua-style act creating rag pictures. By draping pieces of cloth of differing colors and textures onto an easel, she was able to create attractive pictures readily recognizable to the audience. She added the additional touch of using fluorescent coloring so that the pictures glowed under black (ultraviolet) light. Caro performed magic and a vibraharp solo in the show and provided the music for Lucille Hughes's act. Lynn presented her rag picture act and assisted Caro and others in the show, and both of them participated in the various group routines. A few years later Caro, would serve as president of the P.C.A.M. The couple had a successful music store in Oakland, where they lived.

Tolmack

Not much could be found about Tolmack, neither where he was from nor what his background was. He was obviously a variety act and probably played the last of the vaudeville houses. He was an able dancer and a juggler and performed good sleight-of-hand with cigarettes, cards, and balls. His primary addition to the show was as a novelty act, with tap dancing that included some acrobatic elements while performing sleight-of-hand. He assisted in several of the other features, as well.



Donna & Jimmy Eyster

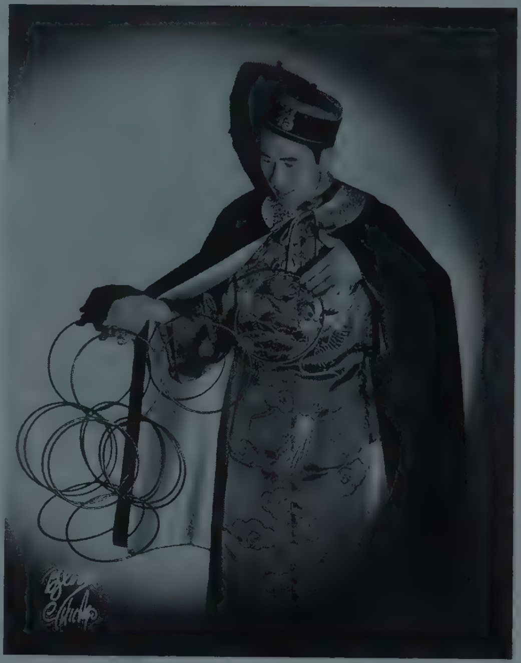
Jimmy and Donna Eyster were billed as being from Canada, which was probably true. They first appear in reports from Seattle, so they were quite possibly from Vancouver. Whether or not they were permanent residents of the States is unknown. Initially, Jimmy did a standard magic act with Donna assisting him. However, the popularity of Harry and Frances Usher and of Mardoni and Louise, mind reading teams of the late twenties and early thirties who played throughout the States, led the Eysters to develop their own act. Jimmy, who cut a debonair figure in white tie and tails, coded information to his wife, Donna, a stunning brunette with the aloof beauty of Yvonne de Carlo, a popular starlet of the time. They looked good on stage, and by the time the show reached southern California, their act was also very good.

Clarence Slyter & Marcia Adair (Fitzkee)

Dariel and Marcia Fitzkee we know. Dariel was extremely knowledgeable and capable. However, the fact is that he was never meant to be a star performer. He first discovered this during his Chautauqua days, and, although his knowledge of magic was phenomenal and he understood the elements of showmanship for the modern magician, he was unable to personally put them into practice to the degree he would have liked. He performed his routines well and was pleasing to the audience, but as a performer he was good, perhaps very good, but not great. Dariel performed the Razor Blades from Mouth routine and a guillotine routine with Marcia, with Jimmy Muir providing comic relief. After Señor Maldo dropped out of the show, Dariel took on the role of the Mexican magician, speaking in a somewhat exaggerated dialect for comedy effect. Quite possibly he was actually better as a character magician, because after the show closed he performed his standard club act in character as a Mexican magician. He billed himself as Dariel Fizkee from Illinois. Marcia had show business in her blood and was very likely an excellent assistant. For purposes of the show she took on her maiden name, Marcia Adair, from California. In the early months of the show, she assisted Maldo in the substitution trunk escape. This had always been a favorite feature for Dariel, as well; so, when he took over Maldo's role, the two of them worked the sub trunk equally well.

Lynn Miller & Dariel Fitzkee

Clarence Slyter, billed from England but actually from Tacoma, Washington, had won top awards in P.C.A.M. competition, and his "A Magician's Night Out" was one of the most popular acts in the Northwest. His background was legitimate theater, although he did appear professionally as a magician in between his engagements as an actor. His work with the *International Magicians* show introduced him to the Midwest and he eventually settled in Chicago. Between 1940 and 1947, he played a few theaters in the Midwest, from Montreal to Akron, but was primarily featured in Chicago hotels such as the Palmer House, the Bismark, and the Sherman. He was a marvelous performer, but in the early days of television, many hotels and nightclubs discontinued live entertainment. Dick



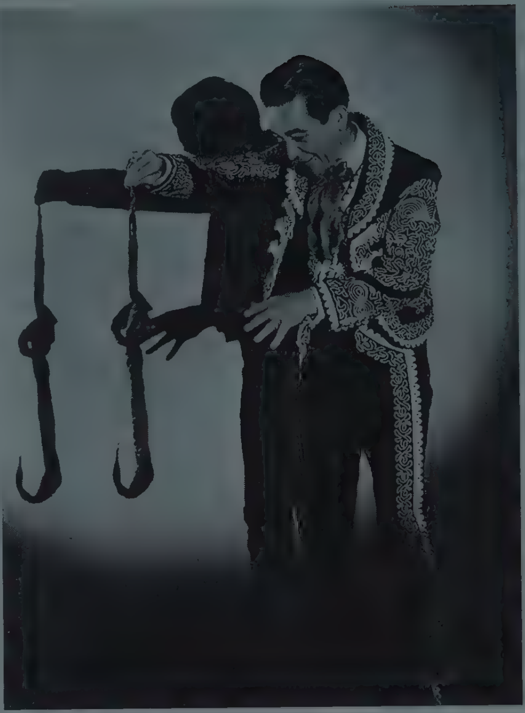
Mossey, of Milwaukee, knew Slyter to be an affable fellow with a great mind for magic who is credited with inventing the multiplying candles. Like many show business personalities, his last years were difficult, and he lived with relatives and earned his living as a weaving specialist mending clothing.

Ming, a true Chinese, was perhaps originally from China, but was living in Reno when Dariel first met him. In a short newspaper interview, Ming said, "To become a magician in China one has to apprentice himself to a Chinese magician, and in that country all magicians are banded together in a tong. Very much like the trade unions in America, except that the pay is different." The article explained that while Ming was an apprentice, he received no pay whatever, only his meals. His pay was to have his master teach him one new trick each year. Whether or not that was true, it made for great press. Ming was a capable magician and a romantic character, performing typical Oriental magic such as the Linking Rings and the Rice Bowls while wearing gorgeous Chinese robes.

Lucille Hughes was an attractive, shapely blond who convincingly played the roll of a magicienne from Sweden. In fact, she was born Lucille Franklin in South Dakota. Her parents were vaudeville acrobats, although her father was always interested in magic and introduced Lucille to it early. Interestingly, her parents never talked about show business, apparently leaving the children with family while they went on the road. When Lucille was fifteen, her father decided to put the children into the act, and suddenly Lucille was an acrobat. She married and with her husband continued with an acrobatic and magic act. When they separated, Lucille decided to keep the name Hughes and go out on her own with magic. "I've studied and I've worked hard at it," Lucille told reporters, "and I think that I have succeeded in overcoming some of the natural antagonism which the male members of the profession have shown toward the opposite sex poking their noses into the secrets of the trade." She had two feature spots on the show and, with Slyter and Maldo, was one of the three most popular acts in the show. The fall following the P.C.A.M. convention, she played the Golden Gate Theater. It is possible Dariel saw her act there, was struck by her good looks, her ability as a magician, and her sense of showmanship, and realized that she would be perfect for his show.

Ming above, and Lucille Hughes

Bill Larsen wrote, "Without doubt,



Señor Maldo and Slyter

Maldo is the star hit of any program." At the San Francisco P.C.A.M. Opera House show, where he was scheduled to perform for fifteen minutes, incessant applause from the general public – remember, a sold-out house of nearly 3,500 persons, only 400 of them magicians – made it necessary for Maldo to continue for a full half-hour. Born Abel Maldonado, he toured the Southwest, Mexico, and South America as Señor Maldo for many years, performing magic in authentic Mexican costume. His quiet charm and pleasing personality, coupled with great skill and perfect sense of showmanship, made him a favorite on the West Coast. In addition to his magic, Maldo had several business interests in his home city of Santa Barbara. He also played the piano and guitar, sang, danced, and rode with a Mexican equestrian group known as Los Rancheros Visitadores. He performed magic because he loved it and did so with the skill of a professional and the love of an amateur. In addition to his regular act, he and Marcia performed his version of the substitution trunk – in two seconds, flat.

These were the performers who took Los Angeles by storm.

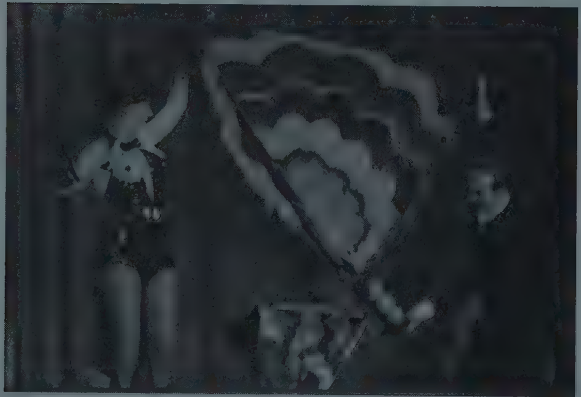
One of the most influential show business magazines in Hollywood was Rob Wagner's *Script* magazine, read weekly by everyone in the entertainment business during its twenty years of publication, from 1929 to 1949; and one of its most influential critics was Richard Sheridan Ames, who went to see the *International Magicians* show at the El Capitan. He wrote: "Even the miraculous Orson Welles and his bearded cohorts sat up and took notice at Dariel Fitzkee's *International Magicians* which began its engagement at El Capitan with greater and more spontaneous acclaim than any stage show has had in this town since Matt Allen's house played hot to the swing Mikado. What's more, the frantic applause of a packed auditorium was deserved. Not since Sonja Henie began her personal appearances, have we had anything so novel, so surprising and gasp-making as this cleverly devised entertainment which presents assorted and personable magicians in a streamlined, up-to-the-minute revue mainly devoted to legerdemain. This reviewer has never seen anything like it before and doubts if you have either.

"If you think the show is just a collection of vaudeville antiques, you're all wrong. Bigger and more celebrated shows seldom have the zest, the pace and the variety which characterizes this one, and although ours is a sadly befuddled world, *International magicians* is the first thing to make mystification an absolute pleasure. It makes you feel young again; eager, and superior to reality – and that's a very nice feeling. The 'acts' (and I don't know what else to call them!) are so uniformly good that I shall not attempt to describe any; but just to indicate the range, there are the best card tricks you can ever hope to see. Also, the memory trick, magic pictures, sudden manifestations of flora and fauna, a sophisticated romp called 'A Magician's Night Out,' spoof of a murder mystery, and a knockout version of the famed Houdini trunk illusion. Marvelous magic, with a Noel Coward touch – and if that mystifies you, just get yourself to the theater and explore.

"This attraction hasn't been to New York yet, so it will give you the thrill of discovery as well as the time of your life. Sit down front, forego alcoholic refreshment or you'll think you're mad, prepare to say goodbye to reason for an evening. Don't be too easy-going about reservations, either, because this is a 'hit' show, and you can't hope to be conversationally correct unless you've seen it. Judged by first-night indications it could remain here for many weeks, but it's supposed to tour Eastward. And it even has sex-appeal, if you must have it, which certainly makes it unique – if you remember your magicians."

Seldom has a magic show received such strong acclaim, before or since. The reference to Orson Welles is accurate. The movie star, who loved magic and would travel with his own magic show a few years later in the early days of World War II for U.S.O. audiences, bought out the front row for opening night. Harrison Carroll of the *Los Angeles Evening Herald and Express* wrote, "Welles, who used to dabble in sleight-of-hand in his younger days bought out a row of seats at the opening show.... Never one to be caught short, he tucked a couple of guinea pigs in his pocket so he could produce them – just in case he was recognized and called up on the stage to perform a trick. Which was fine except that nobody called on him. He just sat there, stuck with his guinea pigs." Part of what made the show unique was that no one was called up from the audience. The magic was performed by the cast. Whoever heard of a magic show that did not use audience participation? That was part of the greatness of Dariel's concept.

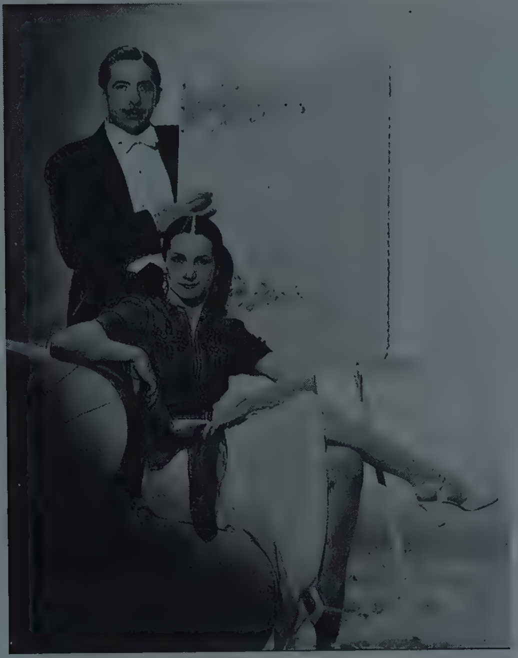
The following description of the show is based on Bill Larsen's review in Genii:


Caro & Lynn Miller in their production number.

The show began as Jimmy Muir stepped through the curtain to introduce the first act, manipulating cigars as he talked, holding one in his left hand, removing it with his right hand to place in a pocket, only to have another suddenly appear in the left hand again, and again, and again.

Caro and Lynn Miller were the first act. Bill Larsen wrote, "The act is so beautifully staged, so smooth and clean, and Caro looks so much like the ideal conjurer, that I was stunned by the sheer joy of it. Against a special backdrop [the show carried five] his gloves changed to a dove, cane to silk and a rabbit emerged from his top hat. More doves are produced from a frame, then vanished from a box. Two empty tubes (Rice haunted chimneys) become magically filled with scores of yards of silk. There may have been other tricks, but there is so much to this show that it is impossible to record all of it. Lynn's effective costuming helps set Caro's act off to advantage.

"Tolmack then manipulates cards, juggles balls and does eccentric dancing while



Left, the Eysters and their blindfold act.

manipulating cigarettes and cigars. His fanning and back palming is especially good. Old stuff, say you? Not the way Tolmack does it. It's his personality that means so much. Everybody in the theatre is his pal from the first second he appears on the stage. He finished with the Miser's dream, in which he is joined by eleven other magicians. They work right down in the audience [seeming to pull coins out of thin air, or from the ears of audience members] and pass out real half dollars to the astonished spectators as 'samples.' This is the sort of thing which shocks the senses of the old fashioned type of magician (Lloyd Jones, for example) but it thrills the laymen and that's what counts.

"Jimmy Eyster and his stunning wife, Donna, next present a fast mental routine that is far and away from anything you've ever seen before. Donna looks like a beautiful mind reader should. The girl has everything – and I do mean everything. [While blindfolded she was able to remember a blackboard full of names of articles called out by folk in the audience, and called them out in turn and backwards. A photographic mind, what?] And Jimmy has an idea in his staging of the act which must be personally witnessed to be appreciated. Caro, dapper in formal white clothes, assisted the Eysters.

The comedy guillotine routine. From left: Jimmy Muir, Dariel, Jimmy Eyster and Tolmack. Marcia, the victim, is behind the guillotine.

"The guillotine illusion is presented as hokey comedy. Fitzkee works the chopper, Marcia Adair (the ever eye-filling Mrs. Fitzkee) is the victim, and Tolmack, Eyster and Jimmy Muir aid in the comedy. [The "chopper" is a version of the guillotine illusion, consisting of an upright frame with a hole in the center. A smaller frame with a blade can be inserted from the top, cutting through anything that is in the hole, such as a head of lettuce... or the neck of a pretty assistant!] Jimmy's nail biting gag and the final faint brings down the house. [In this nail biting gag, Jimmy Muir has a mouth full of small, white beans. While biting his nails he continuously spits the beans out of is mouth. The stage lights pick this up perfectly, and it is simply good, old, slapstick comedy at its best.] Dariel Fitzkee's acting of the part of the executioner is superb.

"Clarence Slyter then presented Charles N. Smith's version of the dancing handkerchief with good effect. [In this classic effect, the magician holds a handkerchief at arm's length, then releases it. It stays suspended and then proceeds to dance around the stage, sometimes even into and out of bottles, and jumps out of a pocket after being safely tucked away, and so on.]

"He is followed by Ming, a true Chinese. Making his entrance in the best looking Chinese robe I have ever seen, he does a new vanishing candle item, the linking rings and

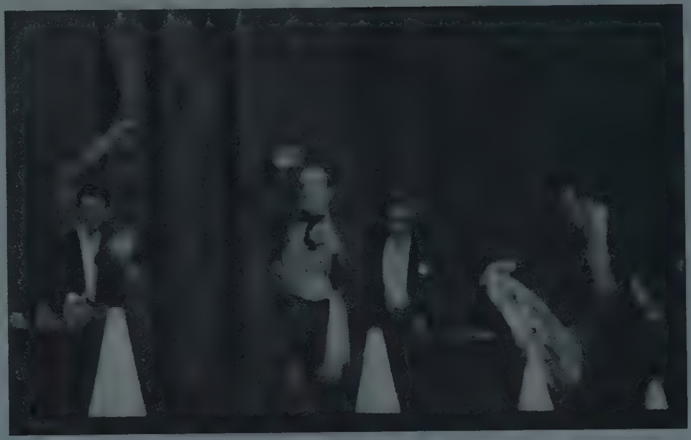
Ming and his Rice Bowls.

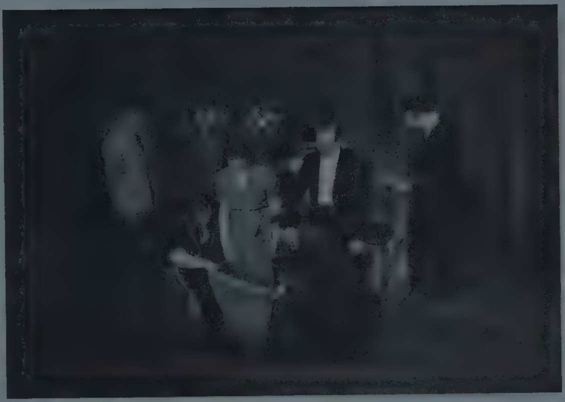
the rice bowls. [The linking rings, of course, are steel rings that seem to link and unlink at the magician's will. Like the rings, the rice bowls are a classic. A China bowl is filled with rice. A second is placed on top, mouth to mouth. When the top one is removed, the amount of rice has doubled. In some routines this happens again, in some the rice is poured out and the bowls placed mouth to mouth again; when the top one is removed, the bottom bowl is filled with water.] He also cuts and restores a long piece of cloth assisted by Marcia and Tolmack.

"Jimmy Muir and Tolmack, disguised and ornamented, then go into a burlesque routine, which almost wrecks the theater. Eggs, gun powder, fire and water all figure in the act. There's no sense to it at all, but it's the funniest magical take off I've ever seen. As the two go into a paper tearing routine the whole cast joins them on stage. [Each one is going to tear sheets of tissue paper into pieces and then restore them – at least, that's what the audience expects. One by one the magicians open up the torn and folded papers. One by one, instead of the original papers, the magicians have magically each made a paper hat.] All kinds of hats. Overseas caps, party hats, mortars, bonnets and even sombreros. [At the conclusion, Jimmy Muir opens out his papers. Instead of a hat he is holding a pair of paper bloomers, which he holds up in front of himself to good laughs.] Thus ends the first half.

"After the intermission, Maldo introduced Lucille Hughes, a shapely, good looking little blond who can sell magic like nobody's business. Her offerings included sympathetic silks [Three large silks, shown one at a time, are gathered together and set to one side. A second set of three silks is knotted together. When the first set is picked up, the silks are found to have knotted 'sympathetically'], a routine with a canary, egg, orange and grapefruit [A canary is vanished. Then the performer produces a grapefruit, spiral slices it open to reveal an orange, which is sliced open to reveal an egg, which, when broken, produces the canary], the Sterling egg trick [A small piece of paper is crumpled and, while bouncing on a fan, changes into a real egg] and the dove pan [A large, round pan with a cover is shown empty. The lid is replaced, and then a dove is produced from the pan]. And, gentlemen, you've never seen the dove pan done until you see what she can do with it. Lucille reminds me a little of Mae West, were la West younger and more beautiful.

"Dariel Fitzkee, in all solemnity, presents the razor blade swallowing. The audience falls for it hard. I like Dariel's method of presenting effects of this type.





Top photo, Marcia Adair steps into the cloth bag, which will be tied shut and then placed into the trunk. Dariel is standing to her left. Bottom photo, "Trickskrieg, the finale of the show.

[The performer places several double-edged razor blades in his mouth, followed by a length of thread. He then removes the blades strung on the thread.]

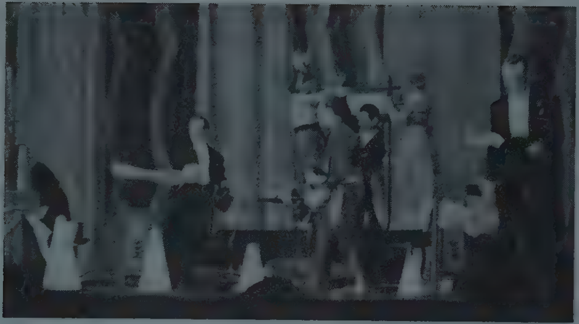
"Lynn Miller, in revealing evening dress, creates three rag pictures and adds to their effectiveness by submitting each of them to 'black light.' They're beautiful. She then creates a rag picture of a top hat and extracts a real rabbit from the hat. Just the right touch of novelty and an act you'll always remember.

"Clarence Slyter, long one of my favorite conjurers, impersonates a drunk. Attired in top hat and tails, everything happens to him. He multiplies glasses of liquor, catches cigarettes and goldfish from the air, wilts a flower with is breath, finds alarm clocks in his hat and ends with the surprise production of a large glass of beer in each hand. He stops the show. It is magic's most novel act.

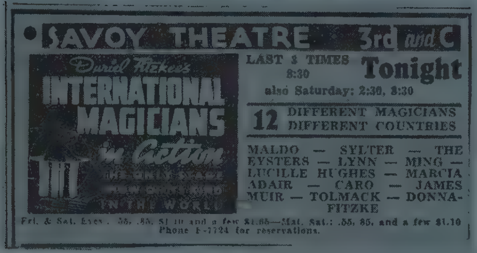
"Caro plays the vibraharp. When I say he's as good a musician as he is a magician, I can accord no higher praise. During his second number, Lucille Hughes levitated a large ball. [The floating ball would not simply have levitated, it would have floated around the slightly darkened stage. The combination of a beautiful blond and the shining ball floating mysteriously in the air to the haunting music of the jazz vibraharp would have been very effective.] Here was the height of conjuring artistry.

"'Murder In A Telephone Booth' is Fitzkee's build up on the Waller illusion. Fitzkee, Caro, Lynn, Tolmack, Eyster and Slyter all take part. Everything changes about and we find it's a topsy turvy world. [In this puzzling illusion, the cast acts out a murder while a narrator explains it to the audience. A judge is introduced and sits behind a bench, reading a newspaper. A girl enters a telephone booth. A thug opens the door and stabs her. This is seen by a witness who calls to a policeman who is standing to one side of the stage. The policeman opens the booth; it is empty. He steps into and through the booth, then, facing the audience, removes his hat. He is the blond. The witness turns out to be the judge, the actual witness is found in the audience... blackout.] It's fun from beginning to end. This is illusion work as it should be done in modern times.

"Senior Maldo, one of the most capable magicians ever to grace any stage, tears and restores paper, performs colorful silk effects, does the six card repeat [A trick where the performers shows six cards, throws three away and still has six cards. This is repeated several times until finally there really are only three cards left.], a design from paper [Using a three-foot square of paper, Maldo folded it into a small packet and tore or cut sections out of it. When the packet was opened, a large, circular design was shown and around part of the circumference was torn out the name Los Angeles.], and, assisted by



Top, another photograph of the finale.



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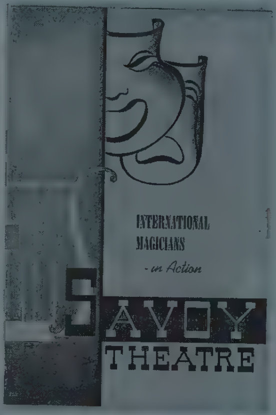


The show went to San Diego for a week and then returned for a fourth week in Hollywood, this time at the Orpheum.

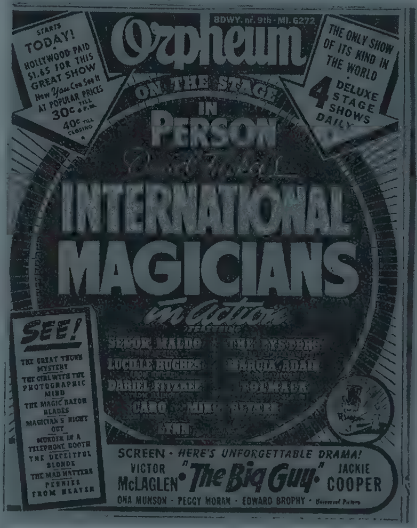
Marcia Adair, worked the substitution trunk in two seconds flat. [In the substitution trunk the magician is tied into a bag, which is then locked inside a trunk or wooden packing case. The assistant stands on top of the case, lifts a circular curtain high overhead, hiding the box completely, and instantly is replaced by the magician. Upon opening the trunk, the assistant is found inside the bag.] Maldo is attired in native Mexican costume. Very colorful.

"The show closes with all twelve magicians working different tricks at the same time." [Dariel would call this "Trickskrieg," a take off on the German "Blitzkrieg" bombing of England during the Battle of Britain at the beginning of WW II.] "By the time curtain goes down the stage is full of silks, flowers, ducks, chickens and, in the midst of all, Lucille attired as a rabbit is taking a man out of a hat.

"I have not mentioned all of Muir's comedy work but he is responsible for much of the success of the program. His crying gag with the musical saw is tops in comedy.

"The show uses four or five special back drops, has its own musical score (Fitzkee carries his own music director) and runs along at a fast pace without a single hitch."

That is the show that received rave reviews from the film capital of the world. It was so well received that it was held over for an additional week, closing on February 17, and might well have played longer except that Dariel had a signed contract with the Savoy Theater in San Diego for February 22, 23, and 24. After playing to happy crowds there, the show went back to Los Angeles for a week at the Orpheum Theater. However, the Orpheum was a cinema theater, and the *International Magicians* shared the bill with the movie "The Big Guy," starring Victor McLaglen and Jackie Cooper. This required the running time for the magic show to be cut significantly, which was difficult to do. They ran over their allotted time the first night and had to make further cuts. The cuts worked, however, and George Jackson of the *Evening Herald Express* said that fitting "it into the shortened space of a vaudeville show has, if anything increased entertainment value." We suspect that was not what Dariel wanted to hear! Leo Simon of the *Daily News* reported that Dariel "managed to retain all the performers and their specialties, resulting in a lightning fast show, as even the original was much faster and smoother than the average theatrical production."



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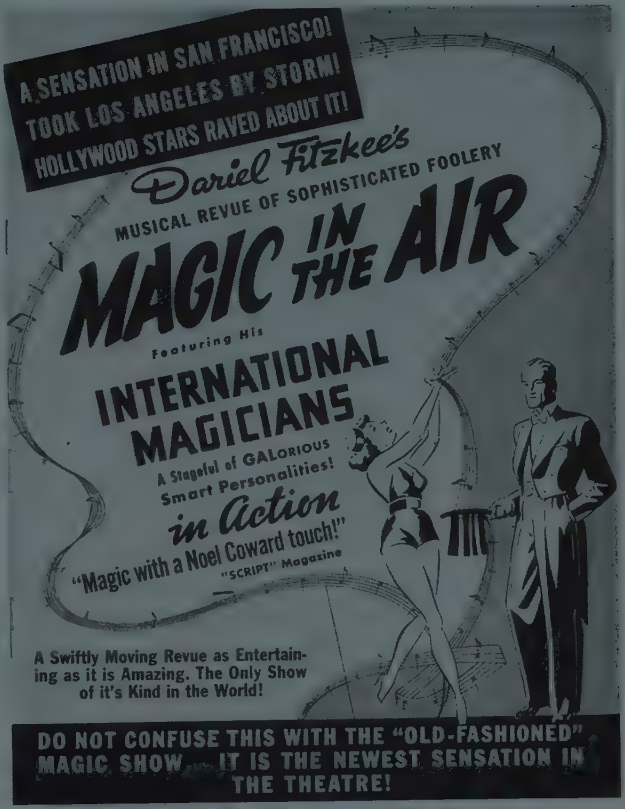
Chapter 12

Magic in the Air – Road Show to Nowhere



A SENSATION IN SAN FRANCISCO!
TOOK LOS ANGELES BY STORM!
HOLLYWOOD STARS RAVED ABOUT IT!

Dariel Fitzkee's
MUSICAL REVUE OF SOPHISTICATED FOOLERY
MAGIC IN THE AIR
Featuring His
INTERNATIONAL MAGICIANS
A Stageful of GALORIOUS Smart Personalities!
in Action
"Magic with a Noel Coward touch!"
"SCRIPT" Magazine

A Swiftly Moving Revue as Entertaining as it is Amazing. The Only Show of it's Kind in the World!

DO NOT CONFUSE THIS WITH THE "OLD-FASHIONED" MAGIC SHOW... IT IS THE NEWEST SENSATION IN THE THEATRE!

The show went on the road – Salt Lake City, Cheyenne, Denver – under the new name of "Magic in the Air."

Dariel and the cast knew they had a hit show, and they no doubt believed they really could take the show all the way to Broadway. They had drawn good crowds and were making money, especially considering their success at the El Capitan, where the first week's take was $7,500! *Genii* reported that the show hoped to play Phoenix, but that did not appear to have materialized, and the next booking was not until April 14, 1940, in Salt Lake City. They needed the time, for two of the acts left the show after the southern California run. Tolmack was replaced by dancer Eddie Burnette, about whom we have been able to find but little information. Tolmack's unique "gimmick" was his ability to do acrobatic dancing while tap dancing and producing playing cards. He could bend his knees and lower his full body backwards to the floor and then bring himself upright again. Eddie Burnette's "gimmick" was the use of a small, steel-topped platform, where he tapdanced. When the lights were turned down, his taps created an impressive display of sparks. He was a handsome, personable man and fit in well with the other cast members.

A more serious loss was Maldo, acknowledged by the critics as one of the stars of the show. It is not certain why either of these men dropped out. Perhaps with six weeks until the next show Tolmack simply needed steady income and had to accept other bookings. Perhaps Maldo, who had always worked short bookings in order to stay in and around his Santa Barbara home, decided he could not commit to Dariel's dream of a Broadway show. Dariel decided that he would assume Maldo's role as the great Mexican magician. He donned an authentic Mexican costume and eventually grew a pencil-thin mustache, which he would keep for the rest of his life.

As difficult as losing Maldo must have been, the company's spirits were high, for while in Los Angeles the show signed with the Leo Morrison Agency, one of the best in Hollywood. The agency would not have accepted them unless they felt the show was quite good and destined for continued success. If anyone could get them bookings, Leo Morrison could

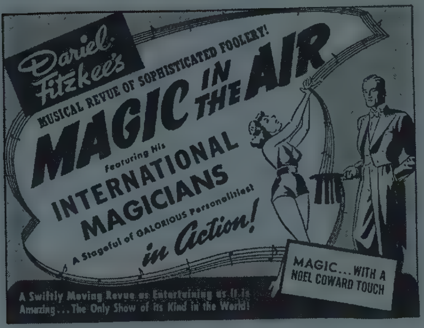
Maldo left the show and Dariel played the role of the Mexican Magician. A singer, Wanda Owens, was added to the cast and Tolmack was replaced by dancer Eddie Burnette.

– but the name had to go. *International Magicians in Action* became "Dariel Fitzkee's Musical Revue of Sophisticated Foolery, *Magic in the Air*, featuring his International Magicians, A Stageful of GALorious Smart Personalities! In Action!" "Magic with a Noel Coward touch!" using *The Script* review line. Noel Coward was one of the most successful playwrights of the day.

Dariel attended the bi-monthly meetings of Los Magicos and tapped their resources, especially Hollywood personalities Bert Kalmer and Chester Morris, as well as P.C.A.M. President Caryl Fleming, who was also a film director. In addition to their own suggestions, they introduced Dariel to well-known film director Macklin Megley, who went through the whole show with Dariel, restaging it. Magley's name appeared on their program from that time on. A nice touch was new dialogue for the opening of the show and the beginning of the second act, written by Bert Kalmer's song-writing pal Herman Ruby. Back in the Bay Area, the company set to work revising the show to incorporate several new ideas. The new catch-line, "A Stageful of GALorious Smart Personalities!" indicates that someone, quite possibly Megley, suggested that the show needed more sex appeal. His name seems logical, since he and Dariel would necessarily have considered the new musical comedy illusion numbers that were added to the show when they restaged it. It is important to remember that the goal was Broadway, and the recommended changes were designed to lead the show there.

The opening was the weakest spot, they decided. Caro's magic was good, very good, but it was still too much like the openings of traditional magic shows. They moved Caro to the second spot on the program. In the new opening, the curtains would open to the cocktail lounge of a magic club with a bartender (Jimmy Muir) behind the bar pouring drinks, and the president of the club (Dariel), stage center, would introduce the full cast as they strolled on stage, singly and in pairs. The presentation would be in the form of a short dramatic vignette, with the bartender pouring any drink called for from a clear cocktail shaker. Once the cast was onstage, they would decide to give a show, ostensibly the show that the audience was about to see. But to do that show, they would need money, the club's president (Dariel) explained. Then they would all go into the Miser's Dream sequence with the magicians going into the audience to produce silver dollars from the air, which used to be the third act of the show. Another change to the show was the addition of Wanda Owens, a pretty brunette soprano who would sing "Pennies from Heaven" to accompany the Miser's Dream. She would also introduce Ming in a pleasing vocal manner. The "Mad Hatter" paper hats routine, which originally closed the first half, would be moved to the second half of the show.

They decided they needed another musical magical comedy piece to close the first half of the show. After Jimmy Muir and Jimmy Eyster (taking Tolmack's place in the magic


Dariel Fitzkee's
MUSICAL REVUE OF SOPHISTICATED FOOLERY!
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MAGIC...WITH A NOEL COWARD TOUCH
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skit) would perform their comedy routine in one, the curtain would open to show a backdrop representing a beautiful spring day with Wanda Owens on stage singing "Isn't It a Lovely Day." The entire company would then stroll on stage, singly and in pairs, arm in arm. One of the men would hold out his closed hand, and a stream of water would spout three feet into the air in a continuous flow as if from a water fountain. One of the ladies on a park bench would open her umbrella and beckon him to join her. As he did so, he would pass the spout from his hand to that of another person; and this sequence would continue throughout the routine. Eventually the spout would be placed on the edge of an umbrella, where it would stay even when the umbrella was twirled as the person carrying it walked across the stage. One of the company would take it back into his hand and transfer it to the back of a dog to end the routine. Invented by Japanese conjurors, the Water Fountain illusion had been performed by Thurston in the last years of his show and by Dante and others. However, the illusion was usually performed in a more formal, Oriental setting. The musical comedy setting was a unique and delightful concept. It should be noted that although it was listed in the program from Denver on, Dariel was never able to fully implement this routine. It was dropped by the time they played Detroit. The interaction among the cast required more rehearsal than they had time to give it.

They also decided the show needed a new opening act for part two. The setting would be "The Modiste Shop," a ladies clothing shop, with Jimmy Muir as the salesman and the lady performers playing customers and salesgirls. The scene would open with Lynn Miller as a salesgirl performing her rag art act, showing the other girls what she could do with scraps of cloth. At the conclusion, she would throw a drape around an upright stand and a bridal veil over a manikin head and then produce a live girl from under the drape – a version of the "Vampire," or "Creo," illusion. This would be followed by Wanda asking to try on a bathing suit. Because the fitting rooms were all occupied, she would step behind a stack of hat boxes and supposedly remove her clothing while Jimmy rolled his eyes. To conclude, Jimmy would knock the boxes over, only to find that Wanda had disappeared.

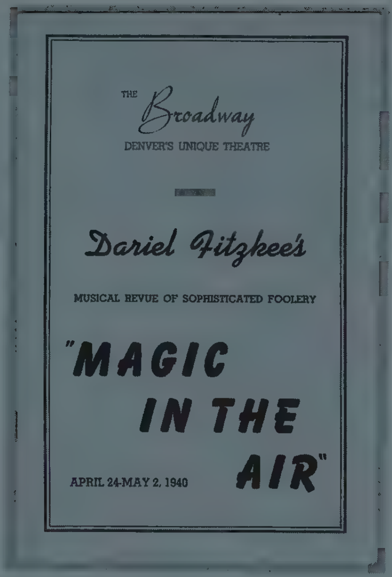
Dariel and Marcia were often highlighted in show reviews for their lightning-fast substitution trunk effect.

Maldo's fifteen-minute spot would be cut in half, and Dariel, assisted by Marcia, would perform a cut-and-restored rope segment followed by the substitution trunk illusion, which he performed almost as well as Maldo did. When they performed it in Denver, The Billboard reported that, "Fizkee's work with the trunk trick is the highlight of the show." The balance of the show was essentially unchanged.

As good as the show was in California, Dariel must have felt that the addition of three more vignettes, or dramatic scenes, featuring music, comedy, and illusions, would make the show more appealing to Broadway producers.

The revised show played Salt Lake City for four nights, beginning Sunday night, April 17. "Every trick in the magic bag has been woven into Dariel Fitzkee's totally, un-

Reviews were good, but not great, in Denver.



THE Broadway
DENVER'S UNIQUE THEATRE

Dariel Fitzkee's
MUSICAL REVUE OF SOPHISTICATED FOOLERY
"MAGIC IN THE AIR"
APRIL 24-MAY 2, 1940

usually new musical revue, *Magic in the Air*... The difference between *Magic in the Air* and other musical shows is that it is magical. The difference between it and other magic shows is that this is funny and tuneful.... Mr. Fitzkee has something here, for there is nothing else like it." – *The Deseret Morning News*. It is unsure whether all of the changes were in place for that show, since reviews, while fairly good, were not specific, and no program from that show could be found.

According to Ted Annemann in his *The Jinx* magazine, a very popular weekly four– and sometimes six–pager, the show went from Salt Lake City to Laramie and then Cheyenne, with what had to be one-night stands before heading down to Denver where they were to open at The Broadway theater for a week beginning April 24. But... it was not without some difficulty. Expenses for each show were high. The show required a stage crew of seven men, one front spotlight operator, and this was in addition to the crew of three they carried with them. Annemann wrote, "The $13,000 reported spent on the show to get it under way in grand style didn't do much good after Cheyenne, and that western town of frontier history wouldn't let go until Denver interests settled the $400 worth of bills..." That is, they did not take in enough to pay theater expenses, let alone pay the principles! They were booked for a week in Denver, so it is likely that the Broadway management covered the Cheyenne expenses to get the show into their theater, hoping to make enough to get their $400 back.

Reviews in Denver were fair, but not great. "This is probably the most pretentious show built around magic that has been attempted for some time," read the review in *The Billboard*. "...The revue combines magic, comedy and music in a way that makes for salable entertainment." The program for the Denver show listed all the changes described above, but the reviews do not mention the water fountain illusion or the modiste shop, so it is doubtful that they were in the show at that time. It was not unusual for a show to cut new routines if they were not quite ready, even though they were listed in the program. Annemann wrote that the billing was inadequate in Denver, and the show was almost a total loss, and suggested that the props were actually attached. "Unless some 'angel' is found," wrote Annemann, "the show's treasury will have to 'hock' even the cash box." How they cleared the bills is uncertain. He also reported that Dariel was trying to arrange "a couple of sponsored shows to carry the production into calmer waters." Perhaps that was the S.A.M. convention show? According to Annemann, they were in debt, with at least three lawsuits on the calendar.

How accurate was Annemann? He was one of magic's gadflys; and his "Editrivia" column in each issue of *The Jinx* was filled with news and gossip, much of it undocumented and sometimes downright wrong. A few weeks later, he wrote "*The Jinx* scooped everybody on that [Fitzkee] show closing in Denver, and we could have told plenty more were we not conversant with personal troubles of show people."

Obviously the show did not close in Denver. Later Annemann would claim that he got the information from an un-named member of the troupe and had assumed it was correct. But the fact that someone from the show would share such information with

Annemann gives evidence that things were not going well.

The Denver review stated that the show was scheduled for several one-nighters in Colorado before heading eastward, but we know of no other bookings before a one-week contract with the Riverside Theater in Milwaukee, a week or so before the S.A.M. National Convention scheduled for Chicago, June 14 – 17. The show may have played Colorado Springs or perhaps Fort Collins, but both of those cities were relatively small in 1940. Between Denver and Chicago was a lot of open prairie, with only Kansas City and maybe St. Louis, if they traveled that way, as possible venues. In any case, they were in Chicago by mid-May, for Dariel and Marcia were guests at the Chicago Assembly No. 3 meeting on May 17. The only other booking they had before the convention was a week in Milwaukee. Six weeks on the road with possibly only one major booking would have been very costly, and perhaps more stress than some of the acts could tolerate. When the company arrived in Chicago, it was without their Chinese act, Ming, and without their comic star, Jimmy Muir.

For Dave Price
Best of luck and
Good Wishes
Sincerely, Kim
2/7/56

To my Friend
"ANDMAR"
With Best
Wishes
Dorny
1935

Ming returned to California and was replaced by seasoned performer, Kuma. Jimmy Muir left the show as well and was replaced for the Milwaukee run by Dorny, one of magic's most successful comedy emcees.

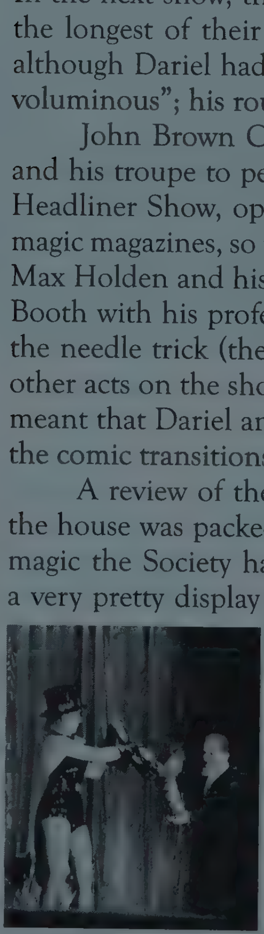
Chicago was one of Dariel's favorite cities, and he had likely met several of the local magicians when he and Marcia lived there in the early twenties. The number of top Oriental magicians in the country, as they were referred to then, was relatively small. One of the more popular and enduring acts was the Japanese magician Kinjiro Tanko Kumajo, who, working as Kuma, had played first vaudeville and then clubs dates regularly since 1915. His signature piece was the production of ladies' shawls, Japanese lanterns, a live rabbit, and numerous other items from two large cylinders that nested one within the other. The trick was quite literally an ancient Japanese trick over 400 years old, but became known to the magic world as the "Kuma Tubes" because of Kuma's artistry with them. He handled them so expertly that he could toss one into the air where it would somersault and fall, nesting over the other tube resting on the table. Then he would produce a bowl of water from one of the tubes and pour the water out to prove it was real. When he tried to put the bowl back into the tube, it would not fit. At the conclusion, he produced a large silk or flag, several feet high and wide, from the tubes. When it was completely out, Kuma was momentarily hidden from view. In seconds, he stepped from behind the silk to take his bow and was seen to have made a complete change of clothing, from a black tuxedo to an all-white Palm-Beach suit with white shoes, straw hat, and cane. With the advent of war with Japan, Kuma changed his stage name to Kim Yen Soo, and claimed to be Korean. Kuma agreed to take the place of Ming.

Dariel contacted Werner "Dorny" Dornfield, a Chicago resident, and persuaded him to join the show, at least for the Milwaukee booking. "Dorny" Dornfield was one of the most successful and popular magicians on the variety circuit and was a regular in vaudeville in Chicago when the Fitzkees lived there eight years earlier. He began his career as a soldier during World War I, attached to a show unit. His forte was stand-up comedy magic, and for years his act was billed as "W. Dornfield's 'Painless Magic'." Later he was in great demand as the "Magical Chatterbox" and the "Magical Master of Ceremonies." He was a great advocate of magic clubs. He held membership number 4 in the International Brotherhood of Magicians and was national president of The Society of American Magicians in 1931. Dorny accompanied Dariel to Milwaukee to promote the show on local radio. In Dariel Fitzkee's files is a script written for such interviews, although he appears to have used it only three times. The radio host usually was willing to follow along since the denouement would be a trick performed over the radio. After a proper buildup, which included an accounting of Chung Ling Soo's death performing the bullet catch, naming several local magicians and magic clubs, and listing his own impressive credentials, Dariel introduced Dorny, who did the trick. Dorny, a popular celebrity who had played Milwaukee many times, was a box office draw. Milwaukee magician Dr. Richard Mossey attended several of the shows that week at the Riverside Theater and recalls them with amazing clarity. He also attended the convention in Chicago a week or so later.

The Riverside was an old vaudeville theater that had converted to combined vaudeville and cinema programs. *Magic in the Air* was expected to play three times a day, alternating with the film of the week. Their regular show ran around two and one-half hours, so it was necessary to cut back several features. Dick Mossey recalls that the first show still ran nearly an hour overtime, resulting in a stern admonition from the theater manager. In the next show, they cut out the "Murder in the Telephone Booth" completely, one of the longest of their features, and cut back several other items. Mossey also recalls that although Dariel had excellent presence and spoke well on stage, he tended to be "rather voluminous"; his routines were shortened, also.

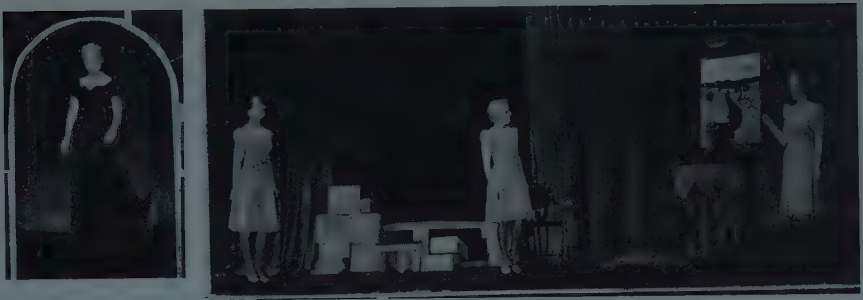
John Brown Cook, Chairman of the Convention Committee, had booked Dariel and his troupe to perform nine of the twelve acts on the Society of American Magicians Headliner Show, open to the public. There was no advance notice of this in any of the magic magazines, so it is uncertain when those arrangements were made. They also booked Max Holden and his shadowgraph act, Vynn Boyer with a series of small tricks, and John Booth with his professional act including catching goldfish from the air and performing the needle trick (the same as the razorblade trick, except with sewing needles) to be the other acts on the show. The venerable Al Baker was asked to be emcee. This arrangement meant that Dariel and his troupe could showcase their best features and not worry about the comic transitions Jimmy Muir usually provided.

A review of the show appeared in the July 1940 *Sphinx*: "At the Headliner Show... the house was packed and the audience witnessed one of the most enjoyable evenings of magic the Society has ever sponsored. ... Caro and Lynn Miller opened the show with a very pretty display of miscellaneous magic. John Booth was next with his well known and always delightful and immaculate magic act. Max Holden followed with his inimitable shadowgraph act. Clarence Slyter then presented a very convincing routine of the Dancing Handkerchief. Murder in a Telephone Booth, a novel quick-change skit, in which Dariel Fitzkee, Caro Miller, Lynn Miller, Eddie Burnette, Jimmy Eyster, and Clarence Slyter took part, closed the first half of this all-star bill.

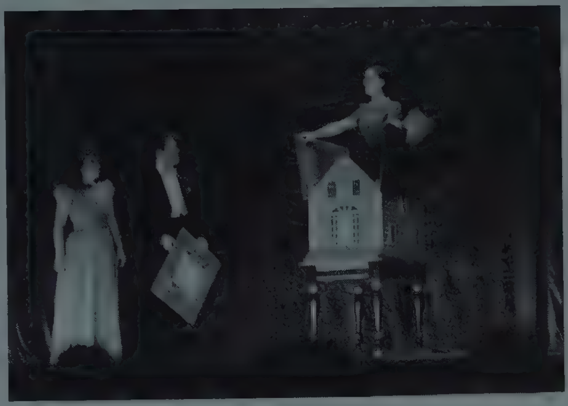


Dariel and his troop performed several segments from "Magic in the Air" in the headliner show of the S.A.M. National Convention in Chicago. They were a huge hit. Lynn & Caro Miller opened the show with their production act.

"'The Modiste Shop,' in which Lynn Miller, Wanda Owens, and Jimmy Eyster appeared, got the second half of the show off to a



Left: The Modiste Shop, with, from left, Wanda Owens, Lucille Hughes and Lynn Miller. Far left, Lucille Hughes.



The Doll House illusion with Wanda Owens, Eddie Burnette and Donna Eyster.

At the finish of the Substitution Trunk Dariel was released from the sack. To his right is Jimmy Eyster. To his left is Eddie Burnette and Marcia Adair.

fine start. Vynn Boyar was on next with a series of small tricks. Lucille followed with a well routined and very pretty act of magic, which was marked by the gracefulness and smoothness of her presentation. Clarence Slyter was next with the unquestionable hit of the evening and – undoubtedly – the star act of the entire conference. His act 'A Magician's Night Out' is packed with surprises and most skillful manipulation. His forte, however, is his amazing pantomimery. Every gesture is perfectly timed. Mr. Caro and Miss Lucille had a hard spot to follow, but they were equal to the occasion with a picturesque and graceful presentation by Miss Lucille of The Floating Ball, with the musical accompaniment beautifully played by Caro Miller on the Vibraharp. The Doll's House was next presented in a novel way by Wanda Owens and Eddie Burnette with a surprise finish. [The Doll House was a new addition to the show; and Eddie, after showing the empty dollhouse to his fiancé, Wanda, was surprised when a pretty brunette jumped out of the illusion.] Marcia Adair and Dariel Fitzkee did an extremely convincing and rapid substitution trunk trick. The show was brought to a spectacular close with 'Trickskreig' presented by the company of the Fitzkee International Magic Show, in which all members of the company appear on the stage and all perform tricks simultaneously. It is a whirlwind of colorful and skillful conjuring."

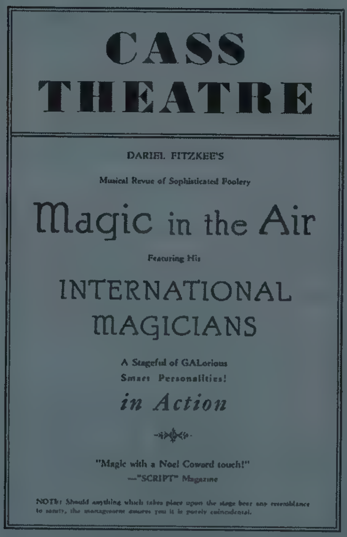
In the July 1940 Genii, Max Holden in his regular column, "Magic of the East" wrote, "On Saturday night the Fitzkee show was one of the best produced magic shows I have ever seen. Great credit must be given to Dariel Fitzkee for this production.... It is the duty of every magician and magic organization to boost for this show and try and get it in your town." What Holden and the conventioneers saw was the best of the *Magic in the Air* show. In the same issue, Chicago's George Troseth added his praise: "The West Coast can justly be proud of Dariel Fitzkee and his gang of swell entertainers."

Dorny was not interested in traveling with the show, so Dariel needed to find someone who could match Jimmy Muir's comedic qualities. He found him in the person of a young comedy magician named Meyer Kessler, who performed a madcap satire on a magic

Right, Ballantine replaced Dorny as the comedy emcee as the show went on to Detroit where it played the Cass Theatre. Sadly, the show disbanded after that week.

act under the name of Carl Ballantine. (For many years in the 1960s Ballantine was one of the stars on the television series "McHale's Navy.") Ballantine would one day receive a performing fellowship from the Academy of Magical Arts and later, in 2007, a lifetime achievement fellowship from the same organization. Desperate to save the failing show, Dariel decided to spice up the show a bit more and hired The Francis Allis Dancers to add some sex appeal. Their next booking was the Cass Theatre in Detroit, and they opened for a week on July 14, four weeks after the S.A.M. convention.

It was a difficult week to play in Detroit. The *Detroit Free Press* ran large ads for "The Artie Shaw Band," which was booked into the Westwood Gardens, the "Waltz King Wayne King," which was at the Eastwood Gardens, and George White's "Scandals" with "40 Gorgeous Glorified Scandals Beauties. Girls! Girls! Girls!" at the Fox. Dariel's two-inch ad just couldn't compete. In fact, Detroit proved to be a poor city for magic. The great Dante show, back in the States after an absence of several years, had a successful run on Broadway and then went to Detroit to play the Cass, the same theater where *International Magicians* had played. Harold Sterling, reporting in *Genii,* said that the Dante show did very poor business, although they got good reviews. Apparently the lousy business got under Dante's skin. He reportedly took it out on the audience, stating that he never cared to come back to Detroit. Sterling wrote that the insults absolutely ruined the show for those who went after the opening night.



CASS
THEATRE

DARIEL FITZKEE'S

Musical Revue of Sophisticated Foolery

Magic in the Air

Featuring His

INTERNATIONAL
MAGICIANS

A Stageful of GALorious
Smart Personalities!

in Action

"Magic with a Noel Coward touch!"
—"SCRIPT" Magazine

NOTE: Should anything which takes place upon the stage bear any resemblance to sanity, the management assures you it is purely coincidental.

Alas, the Fitzkee show had run its course. Changes in personnel and too many changes in the structure of the program had taken their toll. Finances had been stretched to the limit more than once, and there were times, such as in Detroit, when only the stagehands could be paid. The box office receipts at the Cass Theater were small, and the reviews in the Detroit press were the weakest they had been since Oakland. The show "stirred rather than satisfied the curiosity of the onlookers, many of whom, it was evident, belonged to the very large class who in off moments like to indulge in a bit of necromancy for the amusement and puzzlement of their fellows [that is, many in the audience were amateur magicians].... Your reporter... witnessed a diversified offering that instead of being provided by one magician, as was the old order of events, brought forth a dozen, plus an octet of dancing damsels, presumably to supply 'Oriental atmosphere' with their gyrations.... in spite of the fact that the printed program was scrambled as badly as the musicians down in the pit, in their attempts to keep step with the badly shifted routine, a state of affairs that did not help the sum total, [there were some performers who

Another look at "Trickskrieg." Dariel is second from the right.

were] distinguished by their deftness." The reviewer went on to comment on Dariel and Marcia, the Eysters, Kuma, Lucille, etc. Another review, which commented favorably on the acts, pointed out the "discrepancies between the claims of its heralds and what the show actually revealed." Although Dante's experience later helped explain why the Fitzkee show had such a difficult time in Detroit, it was no longer the great show it had been in southern California. The show closed at the end of the week and disbanded.

In hindsight, it seems clear that the several changes and additions had been made in an attempt to attract more bookings, since without bookings it was impossible to keep a show the size of *Magic in the Air* on the road. It is also possible that Dariel was beginning to focus on what he thought Broadway would want, or, perhaps more accurately, on what others told him Broadway would want. Adding the line of dancing girls was nothing more than another nail in the coffin. Each change deviated from the pure, unique show that Dariel Fitzkee had assembled for the El Capitan Theater in Hollywood, the show "with the Noel Coward touch," the show with the speed and smartness of the Folies Bergere, the show so novel and surprising and gasp-making that the seasoned critic, Richard Sheridan Adams, said he had "never seen anything like it before and doubted that we had either." That show had all the elements placed just right. The flow of the show was strong and bright, and each of the principles was perfect for his or her part. That is the show that should be remembered as perhaps the greatest full-evening magic show of its era. It was a remarkable accomplishment and a testimony to one man's dream. That was Dariel Fitzkee's *International Magicians in Action.*

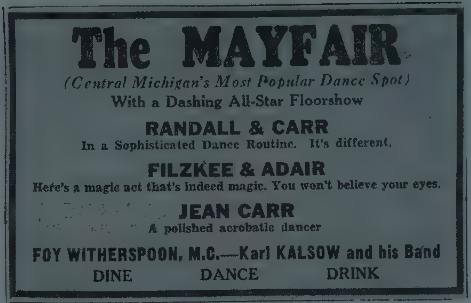
Chapter 13

Aftermath and on to New York City

Jimmy Muir and Ming had already gone back to California, and were soon joined by Caro and Lynn Miller and perhaps Wanda Owens. The Eysters headed back to Washington. Lucille Hughes, who would soon divorce her husband, keeping his last name, stayed in Chicago, working club dates throughout the Midwest. Clarence Slyter would make Chicago and Milwaukee his home base but would work club dates around the country for several years to come. Kuma, who was living and working in the area anyway, simply returned to Chicago. Eddie Burnette and Wanda Owens went their ways, pursuing their own goals. Ballantine had no trouble getting bookings. Even in 2007, Carl Ballantine remembered the show well. In a telephone conversation, his first words were, "He never paid me!" He went on to discuss the show: "The Dariel Fitzkee's show? Sure, I remember Dariel. As I remember, he was only an adequate performer, but he was a likeable fellow, kind of like Paul Daniels in stature, energy, and personality." (Paul Daniels, who was also short in stature like Dariel, was the number-one magic personality for many years in England, with his own television show.) Carl remembered joining the show after the Chicago convention and going with it to Detroit. He had some recollection of the acts, but nothing significant. Carl also said that, when the show closed in Detroit, no one got paid. I had the pleasure of meeting Carl Ballantine in person at the Academy of Magical Arts and Sciences Awards (sometimes called the Magic Castle Awards) a month later. Carl, well into his nineties and sprightly in spite of his cane, and with that ever-present twinkle in his eyes and grin on his face, said upon meeting me, "He still hasn't paid me!"

Dariel and Marcia had invested everything they had in the show. They had not only lost it all, they were also in debt. After all, Dariel's name was on the contracts. Bills were owed to theaters (which was probably the source of most of the lawsuits), and the performers had not been paid for some time. Did they hold Dariel personally liable? Perhaps there were investors in San Francisco who felt they should be repaid. A few months later cryptic comments in Bob Weill's *Linking Ring* column for January 1942 suggested that "repercussions of the Dariel Fitzke show haven't died down yet, watch for more!" The fact was that the Fitzkees did not even have enough money to go home!

Daughter Marcia, who was with them in Detroit, remembers returning to the hotel to find a French key on the door. When a hotel got wind that a lodger was in financial difficulties they put a block in the lock so a key could not be inserted. Her grandfather, Henry Greer, Dariel's father-in-law, wired money to pay the bill. Marcia remembers that Caro and Lynn Miller were very angry over the closing of the show, which was to be expected. No doubt, all the cast members knew the show was on shaky ground when they went to Detroit; but still, when the end came, it must have been traumatic. Someone needed to be blamed, and Dariel was the most logical. Until things were settled, the Fitzkees moved into a residential hotel for a few weeks. It was located in a rather dubious neighborhood,



The MAYFAIR

(Central Michigan's Most Popular Dance Spot)

With a Dashing All-Star Floorshow

RANDALL & CARR

In a Sophisticated Dance Routine. It's different.

FILZKEE & ADAIR

Here's a magic act that's indeed magic. You won't believe your eyes.

JEAN CARR

A polished acrobatic dancer

FOY WITHERSPOON, M.C.—Karl KALSOW and his Band

DINE DANCE DRINK

Dariel and Marcia played club dates as they worked their way from Detroit to New York City.

with dark back alleys complete with knife fights. The Fitzkees had one good friend, Claude Keefe, who stood by them at that very difficult moment and helped them with the transition.

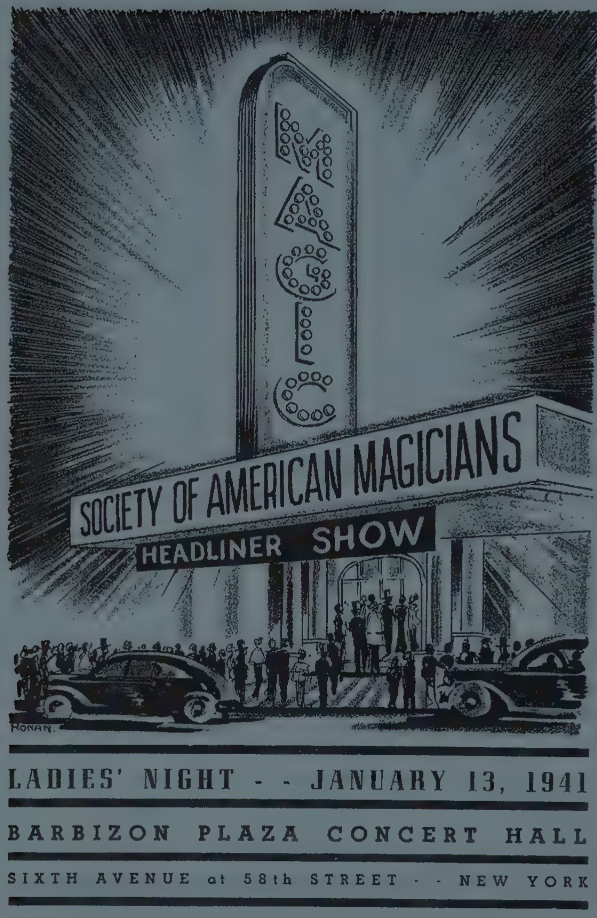
Somehow Dariel and Marcia salvaged a few things and booked club dates in Detroit and the surrounding area. They kept daughter Marcia with them while they played summer resorts in Saginaw and Lansing. She remembers the lakes, Ferris wheels, and dance music at night that lulled her to sleep. She went to bed with one end of a long string tied to her toe; the other end passed under the locked hotel door. When her parents came home they yanked on the string to wake her up so she could let them in. She remembers the green outdoors, carnival games, and a boat trip across the lake to Sandusky. She remembers sweet rolls and orange juice for breakfast, enjoyed under the trees with her father. Sadly, that was the only occasion she ever spent that kind of time with her father; she cherishes those memories. We have only one review of their act, from somewhere in Central Michigan: "Some of the 'magic' of this act is unbelievable, but is cleverly executed and it never fails to click."

Marcia had traveled to St. Louis at the start of the summer with her mother's Aunt Nettie, Muriel's mother. Muriel lived there with her husband, Clarence Hill, who was head of distribution for Columbia Pictures in that area. Marcia had then traveled to Chicago to be with her parents. As her parents made plans to work their way east after those few resort dates in Michigan, Marcia went back to St. Louis and from there back to San Rafael with Aunt Nettie.

Dariel might have been down, but he was not defeated. Like his ancestors, much of his life was necessarily spent overcomeing adversity. This was just one more challenge, and he was not quite ready to give up the dream completely. His next goal was New York City and its Broadway producers.

Dariel and Marcia arranged to play a run of club dates in the Cleveland area beginning mid-September, including the popular Alpine Village. From there, they went to the Pittsburgh area for several weeks and then to Philadelphia. While we have no direct reviews of the club act after Michigan, several magicians commented on them favorably in the magic press. By year's end, they were in New York City, staying with Dariel's old friend and protégé Doug Kelley and his new wife, Alice Vivienne, known as "Dukie." At the July S.A.M. convention, Doug had been elected Vice President for the West Coast, one of the positions Dariel had held years before. Although Kelley was in New York City at the time, he was planning to move west. The upcoming war changed those plans. Doug Kelley and his wife were always stalwart friends.

Dariel immersed himself in New York City magic, spending much of his spare time at Max Holden's Magic Shop on West 42nd Street. In Holden's monthly column in *Genii* he noted that Dariel was in town to meet with booking agents who, according to Dariel, were all very much enthused over his magical revue. We don't know just how enthused they were, of course and we have seen that Dariel always, always, presented a positive front, recognizing that, unless he did, agents would not give him a second look. In addition to his press book, Dariel provided agents with a complete script of the final version of the *Magic in the Air* show, similar to the one that played the Cass in Detroit, including the line of dancers. Clearly Dariel was convinced this was what Broadway wanted. The copy


SOCIETY OF AMERICAN MAGICIANS
HEADLINER SHOW
RONAN.
LADIES' NIGHT - - JANUARY 13, 1941
BARBIZON PLAZA CONCERT HALL
SIXTH AVENUE at 58th STREET - - NEW YORK

Dariel and Marcia played several engagements with the Parent Assembly of the S.A.M. while they were in New York City.

we have is stamped "Edmond Pauker, Inc., Capitol Theatre Building, 1689 Broadway, New York."

"Between booking offices," Holden wrote, "Dariel makes his headquarters at the Holden Shop and has had some chance to watch the skill of the card experts of the world here," namely John Scarne, who would become a close friend, and Dai Vernon. Apparently Fitzkee was skilled as well, for Holden writes, "Dariel Fitzkee explaining the second deal from the book [either a recent Hummer book or *Expert Card Technique*] and how easy it is to perform the sleight."

Dariel stopped by the *Sphinx* office soon after he arrived in New York City and became friendly with John Mulholland. The Parent Assembly of the S.A.M. records that Dariel attended their December 7 meeting, "demonstrating in highly amusing fashion a rope cutting effect." On January 13, Dariel and Marcia took part in one of the Parent Assembly's Ladies Night's, held three or four times a year in the concert hall of the Barbizon Plaza Hotel, with an audience of close to two hundred. Several excellent magicians took part, including Roy Benson and Leslie and Nina Guest. M.G.M. and Broadway star Fred Keating was the emcee and performed next to closing, setting the stage for "Dariel Fitzkee and Marcia Adair, [who] brought the evening to a brilliant close with a number of well presented mysteries: a striking presentation of the razor blade trick among them."

The Fitzkees were back on stage two weeks later as part of an annual "Night of Magic" held in the city. Once again Fred Keating was the emcee, and the bill was very strong, with Dell O'Dell, Ruth Doré, and Jarrow, all successful, full-time professionals in New York City. Dariel and Marcia "...in gorgeous Mexican Costumes presented the famous Substitution Trunk, closing the show."

On February 8, Dariel and Marcia performed "a grand rising card effect" on the after-dinner show held in honor of Dr. Shirley Quimby, President of the Parent Assembly, who was stepping down to serve in the armed forces. These reviews give us an idea of the routines he likely used in his nightclub act: card manipulations and the rising cards, the cut and restored rope effect, and the substitution trunk. This is the last we read of the Fitzkee's activity in New York City, and the last we find Dariel mentioned in *The Sphinx* for three years. Dariel surely must have met Julien Proskauer during this time, but if he did, he never mentioned the meeting.

Chapter 14

Starting Over

Finally, the dream was over. One can only imagine the range of emotions that must have surged through Dariel's brain as they boarded the Greyhound bus at the New York City Terminal in late April, 1941, heading west. Failure? Yes, but tempered by the realization that it came in spite of wonderful reviews, especially in the early days in southern California when energy was high, when the performers were at the top of their game, when he himself was good! There was disappointment, and perhaps bitterness, at the way his friends had treated him at the end, some of whom he had given a real opportunity to star. Surely they must have realized before they signed on that there were no guarantees, that they were all taking a great risk, that if they made it, they all won; if they lost it, they all lost. But it seemed that some had forgotten that. The recognition that it takes more than talent and showmanship to be successful would have been bitter, as well. It takes money to make money. Acceptance, after all these years, that his future did not lie in show business, was difficult. Dariel was far more sensitive than anyone but his family ever knew, and we believe he took this failure hard. Our guess is that his wife was his rock at this point in his life. He loved her with all his heart, and was filled with appreciation more than ever because she had been willing to follow his dream with him, to take the chance. Regrets? Probably some, in particular that the great adventure had been an unhappy one for his daughter, Marcia. Did he ever know how unhappy she had been during the months of separation? Possibly not.

The Fitzkees headed home to San Rafael, the small, attractive little town on the northern edge of the San Francisco Bay. Daughter Marcia was elated. Her parents were coming home. She was a vulnerable pre-teen, and she had missed her parents terribly. She recalls that it had been the worst year of her life, and she had not seen her parents in the eight months since she left them in Detroit. The happy homecoming at 312 H Street in San Rafael, the home of Marcia's parents, would have been bittersweet for Dariel and Marcia, happy to be home but with no home of their own.

While the depression hung on in parts of the country until after December 7, 1941, the day Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, the depression was already over in San Francisco, in many respects. The dark clouds of World War II were gathering, and although many hoped to stay out of a war that was already raging throughout Europe and China, there was an undercurrent of recognition that such would not be the case. The Bay Area supported several large military facilities, both Navy and Army bases as well as shipyards, and they were all gearing up for war. Jobs were plentiful, and Dariel soon found work with the J.L. Stuart Company in San Francisco, a company well known for its work with school auditoriums. As with so much of business and industry, this company shifted a great part of its work into constructing military and military-industrial facilities. Dariel's skills were adaptable to a variety of needs.

In the summer of 1941, Dariel took the dramatic step of changing his last name from Fitzkee to Fitzroy. His brother, Richard, had taken his wife's name of Ford several years before this, but his other brother, Mino, continued as Mino Fitzkee for the rest of his life. Daughter Marcia believes that her father changed his name because it was easily and often misspelled. Indeed, we have found it spelled Fitzke, Fitzky, Fitskey and even Fitzgee, so that reason is quite plausible. Bob Loomis of England reminds us that the parents of the late Lord Mountbatten, perhaps Britain's greatest World War II hero, had been forced to change the family name from Battenberg to Mountbatten early in the World War I years because of intense anti-German sentiment. Mountbatten's father was a minor German prince and his mother a granddaughter of Queen Victoria. Loomis thinks perhaps an association of the name "Fitzkee" with Germany played into Dariel's decision, especially if he was involved in defense work. The few readers who can recall those years will remember that there was a great fear of a 5th Column and sabotage, so that reason is equally plausible. Whether it was one of Dariel's reasons or merely symbolic in retrospect, we can think of no better representation of starting over than changing one's name. We believe that the failed dream was far more traumatic than Dariel ever let on. He yearned for a fresh start and was determined to move forward with his life, to find success in something other than show business. Perhaps he felt that there would be some kind of stigma attached to "Fitzkee" as he pursued a career; perhaps only in his own mind. Yes, he would keep the name Fitzkee as a nom de plume for all of his magic writings, which made sense because he already had several successful publications to his name. But the recent past had been painful and distressing, and Dariel was not one to look back or dwell on regrets. To the rest of the world he became Dariel Fitzroy. The odd thing about it was that Dariel never legalized the name change – he simply took the name Fitzroy, as did Marcia and daughter Marcia! It was on his driver's license, his Social Security card, and on all legal documents from that time forth.

A current photo of the home in San Rafael on Marina Court where the Fitzkees lived in the early 1940s.

As significant as changing his name, Dariel also turned his back on organized magic and, to our knowledge, never set foot in a magic club meeting again. He did continue to maintain friendships with a few of his protégés, such as Dick Madden, Bill Woodfield, and Vince Lynch; and they would visit from time to time after the Fitzkees moved to 14 Marina Court in San Rafael, and then a few months later to a house just behind it at 12 Marina Court, both rental homes. And he would continue his friendship with Doug Kelley when he returned to San Francisco after World War II. But we have never found Dariel's name mentioned in an assembly report for the Golden Gate Assembly 2 or for the Oakland Magic Circle. In 1941, *Genii* magazine won the contract for publishing *M.U.M.*, the assembly report section that had previously appeared in *The Sphinx.* Bill Larsen published a complete membership list of The Society of American Magicians. The name Dariel Fitzkee, the man who had done so much for Bay Area magic, who had been a national Vice President of that Society, and a leading figure in magic, was not listed. In a January 1942 notice in *M.U.M.*, the National Council announced several new members and transfers, including the transfer of Dariel's membership from San Francisco to the Parent Assembly, New York City, as a non-resident mem-

Dariel in costume for his comedy Mexican Magician act.

ber. As far as we know, he kept his membership there for the next several years. We believe he maintained his membership in the national organization and as an associate or affiliated member with the Parent Assembly, because of his intentions to continue writing about magic. It was in his best interests to continue this affiliation, but he had no intention of associating with magicians other than a select few. He had joined the International Brotherhood of Magicians in June 1929, the same time he joined The Society of American Magicians, but an I.B.M. club was not started in San Francisco until May 1946, and Dariel's name was not on the charter. He belonged to the I.B.M. only to receive and advertise in its magazine, *The Linking Ring.* In Bob Stull's November 1941 *Genii* column, Bill and Gerrie Larsen are reported as being in San Francisco and Oakland once again. Also, Malini was playing at the Elks Club, and Dante at the Curran for three weeks. Local magicians were reported hosting Dante at an Assembly dinner and get-together in honor of past presidents of Assembly No. 2. Over one hundred attended. Fitzkee, who had served two consecutive terms as assembly president only a few years before, was not mentioned. Was he even invited? Late in 1941, Bill did run a two-page dramatic magic and illusion presentation in *Genii,* written by Dariel and based on Pepper's Ghost. However, we suspect he already had this in his files, since the original script, which we have, was written in the exact form and on the same kind of paper as the Substitution Trick illusion that was run in *The Sphinx* in 1938.

The P.C.A.M. held its planned convention in Oakland, July 14-16, 1942. Bill Larsen's convention report in the August *Genii* indicates that Jimmy Muir, Caro and Lynn Miller, Maldo, and the Eysters were there, as were Bill and Gerrie Larsen. But there is no mention of Dariel. In fact, the fourth act on the big public show was titled the "International Revue: Jimmy Muir as emcee, Caro and Lynn Miller, Donna and Jimmy Eyster, and Lolita (Mrs. Jimmy Muir – or, Ted to us) and Maldo doing the magic." This was clearly a takeoff on the *International Magicians* show; and, while Dariel's absence from the convention is no surprise, it is nonetheless very odd that Larsen did not mention Dariel at some point in the review in light of this obvious connection. After all, in the January 1941 *Genii,* Bill had written about Dariel and the "favorable material regarding the night club act of Dariel and Marcia Fitzkee," and that Dariel had "done the most of any magician to promote good magic on the west coast." Then Larsen went on to write, "I class Dariel as being one of my very, very closest friends." But Bill makes no mention of Dariel with regard to the convention. But then, we do not know the exact nature of that act except that Maldo did the magic. Perhaps it was a parody, perhaps it was unkind, or an attempt at humor at Dariel's expense. If such was the case, we would not expect Bill Larsen to support it.

Sometimes there is more said in what is not written than in what is. In the January 1942, *Genii,* in his "Northern California Comments," Bob Stull reported that he had a grand reunion with Bill and Gerrie Larsen and the boys at a couple of parties, and he also caught the Larsen show (playing somewhere in the Bay Area). Again, there is no mention of Dariel. In prior years, this was exactly the kind of gathering Dariel and Marcia would have hosted. A two-page article appeared in the May 1942 *Genii* about the upcoming Golden Gate Assembly No. 2 Silver Anniversary. Many of the old-timers were mentioned along with some history and even the current Bay Area magic dealers, including Bob Stull, Lloyd Jones, and others. However, there is no mention of Dariel Fitzkee, the person who breathed new life into the assembly just a few short years before. Why, why, why? A review of the Silver Anniversary Party appeared in *Genii* a few months later, with many photos. Dariel is not mentioned. He probably wasn't there.

Through all of this, we still do not understand why Bill Larsen does not even mention Dariel in his editorials... unless there had been communication between the two and Dariel had requested that Bill not bring his name up. We do not know this, of course.

The most likely reason for the absence of mention is that Dariel Fitzkee was not interested in being a part of organized magic. Perhaps he had been contacted by Bill Larsen and others. It is entirely possible that the Bay Area magicians did extend a hand of fellowship to Dariel, but he had simply refused, and perhaps he had been adamant about not being involved with them. Perhaps he asked them to respect his wishes and not even mention his name. We will never know for sure. He did not give up magic, however.

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the United States Naval Base at Pearl Harbor and war was declared with Japan, Germany, and Italy. The American people were quick to respond, both in joining the armed forces and in elevating a peace-time economy still struggling with The Depression to a war-time industry the world had never known. The next four years were difficult, indeed, with rationing of everything from sugar and chocolate and leather-soled shoes to rubber tires and nylon stockings. The first year challenged the nation's resolve, as its armed forces suffered defeat after defeat. But the courage, sacrifice, and industry of the American people swung the tide and eventually led to a costly but great victory.

Dariel was among the first to try to enlist, but he was turned down as too old to join the Navy (he characteristically always thought he would have made a great Navy captain). He served his country by performing U.S.O. and base shows three or four times a month throughout the war, featuring his comedy Mexican act, in costume and with an exaggerated Mexican accent (which would be considered politically incorrect today but which the G.I.s loved). He also served his community as an air raid warden throughout the war. During World War II, coastal cities feared shelling from enemy submarines and, on the West Coast, from the possibility of aerial bombing. "Blackouts" were frequent, sometimes just as drill, but sometimes because of false alarms. At that time, every structure was required

Dariel and card expert John Scarne became good friends during Dariel's short stay in New York City.

to be able to seal off windows so that no light from inside could be seen from the outside. The air raid warden's responsibility was to walk the neighborhoods checking for violators, looking out for saboteurs, and assisting in any way necessary until the all-clear siren was sounded.

While he did not brood about the *International Magicians in Action* show, Dariel thought about it. The more he did so, the more convinced he became that his theories on showmanship were accurate and that the only things that kept the show from Broadway were lack of proper financing and luck. Some of his theories had been first explored in *Magic by Misdirection*, published in 1935, and in his columns in *Genii* magazine. Bill Larsen believed that the Fitzkee articles were worth far more than the cost of a *Genii* subscription and had stated in an editorial that he hoped Dariel would collect them into a book. Maybe it was time. Dariel set about writing that book.

His work with the J. L. Stuart Company was challenging and interesting, and drew upon his natural interest in science and mathematics. His responsibilities with Stuart required some traveling, and Jim Sherman mentions Dariel in his February 1942 Chicago column in *The Linking Ring*: "Dariel Fitzkee dropped in to meet the gang." (Several Chicago magicians met regularly for lunch, and this was probably one of those occasions.) It is significant that Dariel looked up "the gang" in Chicago, since that indicates that he had not lost his interest in and love for magic and magicians, just the clubs and especially those in the Bay Area. Sherman continued, "Dariel is now doing government work that takes him in various parts of the country." Travel was almost exclusively by train at that time, and this was probably when Dariel began doing close-up card work for soldiers on the trains. He took great pleasure and pride in this, because, in addition to entertaining them, he astounded them with demonstrations of second, middle, and bottom deals, holdouts, stacking and other sleights used by card cheats and gave them tips on how to spot crooked card players. He and John Scarne, probably one of the top card handlers in the world, had discussed this very thing when Dariel had been in New York City. Scarne was doing the same service in a more formal way, publishing articles on crooked dice and cards for *Yank* magazine, the Army weekly, and a book, *Scarne on Dice*, published in 1945, by the Military Service Publishing Company. Scarne also gave demonstrations at military bases and, like Dariel, impromptu sessions with G.I.s on trains. Dariel would tell his family that these were among his most satisfying experiences during those years, along with his shows at hospital wards and military bases during the years of the Korean Conflict.

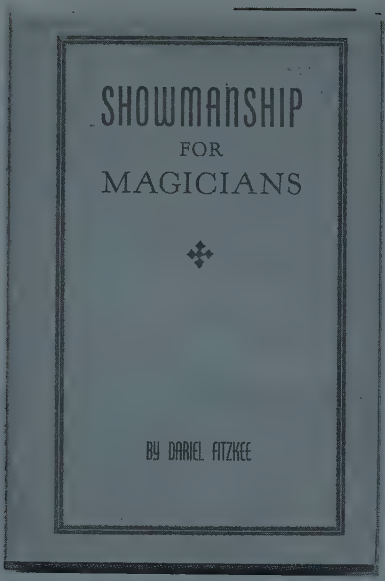
Before the war the J.L. Stuart Company specialized in school auditoriums and similar structures, and since Dariel's experience with Gill-Mann had involved several projects in auditorium design, he was a valuable asset to J. L. Stuart. However, the war led many companies to expand their efforts. One aspect of auditorium design was noise control, and noise control became an important issue for the war effort. Both the Air Force and aircraft engine design companies had need for enclosed facilities in which to test aircraft engines. The decibels could be nearly off the scale as engine noise bounced around the old-fashioned structures of the twenties and thirties, and modern engines were so much more powerful than their pre-war counterparts. It was imperative that some kind of baffle system be installed that would lessen the noise. This was not just a matter of fastening sound-absorbing panels to walls; this required analysis and application using the physics of acoustics, and this was a natural area for the J. L. Stuart Company to pursue. Dariel quickly developed an interest in acoustical engineering; it was much more complex than simple auditorium design and Dariel was drawn to the science of it – it appealed to his intellect. Dariel gradually became expert in this and, as we have seen in his every field of endeavor, looked to share his knowledge with others. He published a paper on "Acoustic Cells for Airplane Engine Test Buildings" in the October 1943 issue of the *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* under his new name of Dariel Fitzroy.

Chapter 15

The Fitzkee Trilogy Years

A variation of this photo appeared in the front of Showmanship for Magicians, the first book of The Trilogy.

For a little over two years daughter Marcia remembers the typewriter busy night after night as her father worked on the book he would title *Showmanship for Magicians*, and by late 1943, Dariel was ready to publish. *Showmanship for Magicians*, by Dariel Fitzkee, but copyrighted by Dariel Fitzroy (as would be all of his books from that time on), was a cloth-bound, printed book of 187 pages, complete with a simple dust jacket that he published himself under the name Saint Rafael House, 12 Marina Court, San Rafael, Calif., which was his home. *Showmanship* was obviously considerably more ambitious than anything he had written before and the first of his books to be professionally printed. A half-page Saint Rafael House ad appeared in the November *Genii*, and in the Stull Magic Mfg. Co. ad in the same issue, Bob Stull advertised the book as well, stating, "The ONLY book that helps the magician as an entertainer." The half-page ad stated: "For All Types of Performance – AT HOME, CASUAL DATES, NIGHT CLUBS, CLUBS, PLATFORM AND THEATRE.... Shows how to present magic for most effective audience response under all performing conditions." A listing of topics covered in the 25 chapters followed and included an analysis of audience preferences, types of audiences, developing act ideas... original presentation methods for all kinds of tricks..., comedy, how to make your act saleable, etc. It sold for $5.00 a copy and didn't teach a single trick! *Hugard's Expert Card Technique* was published about the same time with 341 sleights and tricks in 474 pages and sold for the same price, $5.00. But magicians, although known for their unquenchable thirst for tricks, bought out the first run of 1,000 copies of *Showmanship* in a year, and a second printing of another thousand followed in early 1945.



Not only did it sell well, magicians, critics and performers alike loved *Showmanship.* Paul Fleming, highly respected as a book publisher and reviewer, wrote, "We regard *Showmanship for Magicians* as worthy of careful and repeated readings by every magician.... We regard this book as an important contribution to magical literature..., [and] the best treatise on showmanship that we expect to see for many a day." Frackson, one of the truly great magical performers of any era, wrote, "After all of my experiences in the theatre, there is nothing I can add to it. This one book has all that it took me years to learn."

Showmanship for Magicians was a remarkable book for its time. "Showmanship" may be oversimplified to mean that which the performer does that pleases an audience. Fitzkee's book was the first to explore virtually all of the fundamental elements that make up performance. In fact, by careful analysis of show business stars of his day, and specifically (he would emphasize) NOT magicians, Fitzkee determined that there are 39 such fundamentals, ranging from music, romance, sex appeal, personality, character, and comedy to proper costuming and careful grooming, etc. He then analyzed those fundamentals either singly or in small groups in some twenty chapters, each chapter actually an essay. In his earlier *Genii* columns, Dariel showed a scientist's propensity to logically break down any topic into its smallest units and then analyze each in great depth. This was his approach to the fundamentals of showmanship. To illustrate his theories, he dissected several of the scenes, or acts, from his *International Magicians in Action* show, and explained how he had routined the act to include as many of the fundamental elements as possible, thereby increasing audience appeal.

The book was not flattering to magicians. Dariel stated that fully 75 percent of all performances of magic given throughout the country on any given day were poor according to modern entertainment standards. Furthermore, another 24 percent were mediocre, at best! "When ninety-nine percent of a product is poor or mediocre ALL of it is classified that way," wrote Fitzkee, and that was why every poorly prepared magician hurts magic. He explained that the mere fact that his *International Magicians* show was classified as a magic show made it difficult for him to get bookings, because of the poor experiences theater managers had with magic shows.

The individual magician could overcome this only by looking at his own performance from the spectator's viewpoint and by comparing the showmanship qualities of his own act with those of the top stars of stage, screen, and radio. "You are not a magician," he wrote. "Forget that stuff! You're an entertainer.... Make them like you better than your magic. Make them like you so much they would pay to hear you sing, or tell stories. Make them want to witness your entertainment regardless of what you do!"

We will consider *Showmanship for Magicians* in more depth in a later chapter, but there is one facet of the book that warrants discussion here. I believe that at least equal to Dariel's desire to see magic elevated in the eyes of the public was his desire to validate the *International Magicians in Action* show and more particularly himself as the creator and guiding force of the show. Very few magicians had seen the show; very few had read the glowing public reviews of the El Capitan performances. While many positive comments had been written in the magic press during the run of the show, what was left in the minds of magicians everywhere was that the show had failed, which in Dariel's mind meant that he had failed. He was not about to let that lie.

In his mind, Dariel Fitzkee was convinced that his show could have had a successful run on Broadway... if proper funding could have been found. "Those who are familiar with the actual history of the show," he wrote in the early pages of *Showmanship*, "know its difficulties were not caused by the character, the slant or the material in the production or artistic side. Rather, its progress was impeded by entirely insurmountable commercial obstacles and lack of sufficient capital to allow it to be opened in the only environment which would supply it with the necessary prestige and public opportunity. Sufficient funds were not at hand to take it to Broadway in order to build and exploit it properly as we knew it should be done. That show never had its chance."

"However, through this experience and in view of the reactions available through its receptions by audiences and from many theatre executives, it does supply the foundation for many of the examples to appear later in this text." Fitzkee went on to cite several well-known show business personalities who lauded the show. "Leo Morrison, one of the best agents in Hollywood" wrote Fitzkee, "said, 'If you could open this show on Broadway tonight, with the proper exploitation, it could become a national sensation in weeks.'"

In January 1944, Bill Larsen wrote in *Genii*, "Dariel Fitzkee is a man who gets things done. [*Showmanship for Magicians* is] crammed with much needed information. All magicians should read it and most should apply its teachings." Then, in February, John Mulholland wrote in *The Sphinx*, "...The book should be studied, not merely read, by every individual who now performs magic in public, or who even hopes to do so.... Some of the points Fitzkee puts forth are argumentative and even though the reader, in a few instances, may reach conclusions different from the author's, the reader will benefit from consideration of the views given." That comment by Mulholland is extremely perceptive. The value of Dariel Fitzkee lies not in the acceptance of what he writes. Rather, it lies in the analytical application of his theories to one's own act to determine where they fit or do not fit. If one studies his ideas to that extent, the rejection of any or all of them will still result in a much deeper understanding of the motivation for one's own act.

One further personal note about Dariel before we leave *Showmanship*. In his books, he often drops small indications about Dariel Fitzkee the man, easy to overlook considering the magnitude of information presented. He had his critics, and some of them painted him an egotist, as though his writings somehow suggested that he thought he was the expert on magic presentation. The fact is that several magicians had written cogently about performance, in particular Robert-Houdin, Maskelyne and Devant, and Sam Sharpe. But no one had studied it more thoroughly. Dariel was an expert. Perhaps not *the* expert, but no one else for several generations had given showmanship and presentation the analytical thought he had. Despite his acute analysis, or perhaps because of it, he had no illusions about his own abilities. In *Showmanship*, after describing how he applied the fundamentals of showmanship to his own routines, he wrote, "If you value your future reputation as an entertainer, you will set your sights to a higher entertainment goal than I have achieved in my intermittent attempts. To me personally my entertainment interests have been almost exclusively of secondary importance – extremely secondary – as compared to other interests in my dubious career."[p124] That is, he never held himself up as an exemplary performer, and while he was very adequate, even quite good, he was not the first or second or

PAPER AND INK

by DARIEL FITZKEE

This is the column heading for Dariel's first column in Genii magazine.

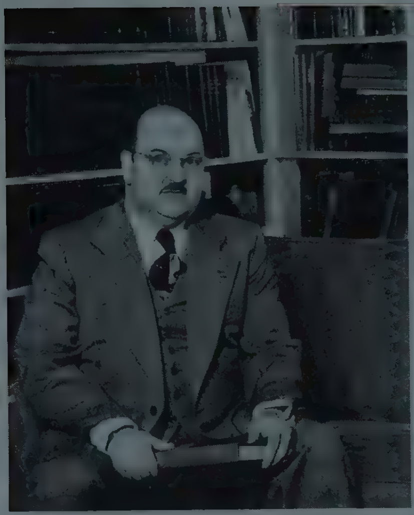
even the third star of the *International Magicians* show. His primary interest had been the design and direction of a show that would appeal to a modern audience. But beyond the *International Magicians* show years, before and after, he was a theorist more than a performer, and his magic, while a passion, was even secondary to his primary occupations, in which he always achieved prominence as evidenced by business success and publication in his fields of endeavor.

By the way, *Showmanship for Magicians* was dedicated to his young friend, "Dr. Douglas M. Kelley, who as Captain with the United States Army overseas, even now as this is being written, is enriching a career I have long watched with admiration." Dariel's only child was his daughter, Marcia. If he could have chosen a son it is likely it would have been Doug Kelley, who was Dariel's protégé in magic and who went on to become a prominent psychiatrist. He served as the Chief Consultant in Clinical Psychiatry at the Nuremburg Trials.

With the publication of *Showmanship for Magicians,* Dariel Fitzkee was back. Once more he was an important figure in the magic scene, possessed of "the most logical mind in magic." Bill Larsen wasted no time in re-enlisting Dariel to the *Genii* cause, and beginning in March 1944, Dariel Fitzkee became the book reviewer for the magazine, a position he would hold for the next twelve years. In his first "Paper and Ink" installment, he explained his system and philosophy: "First, let it be clearly understood: In no sense is this page to be considered a page of criticism. Positively my discussions will not be critiques. In my belief, a review should be a review in the strictest sense of the word. It should outline what a book covers, with suggestions as to whom the material might particularly appeal." He had first presented his system for reviewing magic books in his June 1938 *Genii* column. Under it, a book could qualify for a total of 1000 points, divided as follows: Purpose, 150 points; treatment, 100 points; value of contents in relation to price, 250 points; and material, 500, with sub sections. A few months later, in September 1944, he wrote, "It seems to me that magical literature naturally falls into several distinct classifications and that the reviewer of such material should particularize upon what classifications are emphasized in each book or other writing." He went on to explain that the majority of books tend to emphasize new tricks and how to accomplish them; they have "definite objectives in deception." That is, they present the effects and the mechanics of them; i.e., how they are done. Other books, he explains, emphasizes the techniques of using the mechanics, *Expert Card Technique,* for example; that is, sleight-of-hand or handling prearrangement or device. The third kind of book focuses on the presentation of tricks, which assumes that both the mechanics and the techniques are already mastered.

Even as the magic world was responding to *Showmanship,* and the depth of Dariel's logical analysis, he was busy organizing years of research into a second major book, *The Trick Brain,* which would be published before year's end.

Relations between Dariel and Bay Area magicians had been strained, at best, since the closing of the *International Magicians* show. He had no interest in the local magic clubs, and nor, perhaps, they in him. Daughter Marcia tells us that the rumblings about the show ceased with the success and popularity of *Showmanship* and of the books that followed and



Lloyd Jones, whom we have seen before, invited Dariel to attend a one-day magic convention to be held at his home in Oakland. Dariel declined the invitation. This photo was actually taken about 10 years after the one-day convention, when Lloyd was S.A.M. National President

of her father's prominence as the book reviewer for *Genii.*

At the end of May, 1944, Lloyd Jones, Dariel's old nemesis, offered an olive leaf. He was planning an all-day magic party for July 16 and would welcome Dariel's participation. Three years had passed since their testy exchange in the pages of *TOPS* magazine. A world war had been waged and, although still destructive and of terrible concern, had turned in favor of the allies. Hardships and deprivations have a way of helping people put petty differences into perspective. Written in early June, Dariel's response is very enlightening, and we reprint it here in its entirety:

Mr. Lloyd Jones
3195 MacArthur Blvd.
Oakland 2, Calif
Dear Lloyd,

I have your note of the thirty-first, asking me about your All Day Party on July 16th, and whether I would take an educational spot on your program. I have long since found out that the old adage about the prophet being without honor in his own country is true. No one in this area would be interested in hearing a harangue from me. Most of them think I'm a lousy magician anyway – and they are undoubtedly right.

As for supplementing what I have already said in SHOWMANSHIP: There is nothing I would care to add at this time. The book is a detailed, deliberated arrangement of my own views on the subject, expanded to what I believe to be the maximum of the average magician's interest. Also, I am certain the boys attend these meetings for the sole purpose of picking up a few new tricks, seeing a show, getting a few laughs and a few drinks. So I am quite sure my presence would be of no benefit to you – and certainly not to me.

My interest in magic as a hobby, magic clubs and the social end of magic has entirely disappeared. While Caryl was alive [he had died unexpectedly of a heart attack in 1940 while doing a card trick for guests in his home], he was almost wholly responsible for my interest in magic clubs, conventions and the like. At this particular time most of my old playmates in magic, those with whom I was or am most friendly, are either gone for keeps like Caryl or Vince Lynch, or away, like Doug or Dick Madden, or cannot attend, like those living in other sections. I realize I was never particularly well-liked in this area, except for a few intimate friends. This was emphasized some years ago. Therefore, there would be no personal enjoyment in participating. As indicated in SHOWMANSHIP, I'm not interested in any new tricks. I've got hundreds now I'll never get around to doing, and hundreds of others I'd never undertake. So from that viewpoint I have no interest, either.

The release of new books or the resumption of my writing in *Genii* do not indicate a renewed interest. The former – the books – and my professional performances are strictly commercial. I positively do not make a hobby of magic. The latter, the *Genii* column, is a chore I undertook because Bill Larsen requested it and I thought *Genii* needed help from someone.

The most important reason, however, is that I'm extremely busy – both in my regular work and on the second book of a trilogy I started with SHOWMANSHIP. The latter is about halfway along and I'm already late with it. I've got to keep at it, if I am to get it completed in time for publication on my schedule. Since all of my work on it is done during my spare time, and since very much of my spare time is taken up with professional shows, I have very little free time to spare.

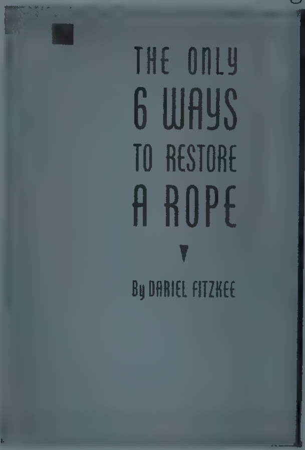
I am giving you detailed reasons why I believe my presence on your program would benefit no one, and why I shouldn't care to attend myself. I feel certain that you will do well with the all-day party idea. Such a gathering should be of interest to a great many, particularly in view of the absence of any real convention.

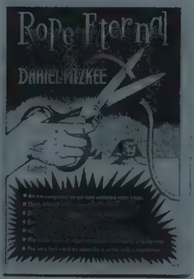
Thank you for asking me. I appreciate the compliment. But in declining I know you will be able to find some else of much more interest to those who attend.

Sincerely,
Dariel Fitzkee

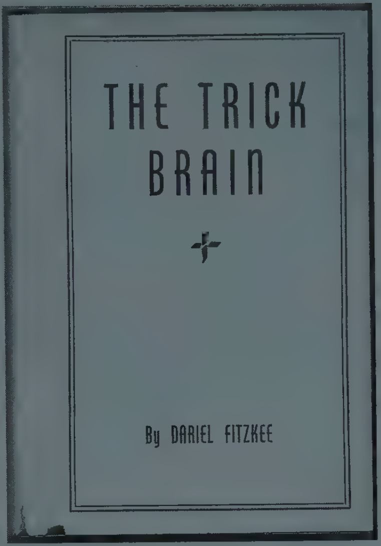
Despite Dariel's protestations, as daughter Marcia has told us, Dariel continued to love magic. He was interested in elevating it as a performance art. He carried on a lively correspondence with a number of magicians around the country, including Milbourne Christopher, John Mulholland, certainly Bill Larsen, Tom Bowyer, David Bamberg, and others, including the close associates he references above. But that was the limit of his social interactions in magic. He was not one to suffer fools gladly and was simply no longer interested in associating with the hobbiest magician or those who he felt had treated him unfairly as a result of the failed show. In his letter he refers to his professional engagements, but we do not know if those extended beyond his volunteer shows for military bases and U.S.O. facilities.

Dariel original rope manuscript was rewritten as The Only 6 Ways to Restore a Rope. It was later released as Rope Eternal.





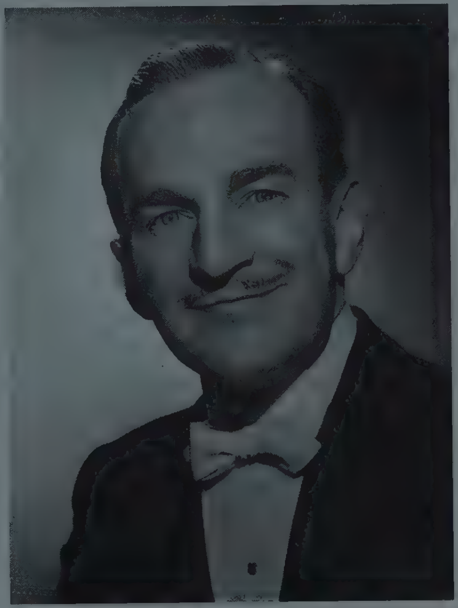
As part of his commercial enterprises, Dariel took his old manuscript, *Cut and Restored Rope Manipulation*, published in 1930, and added a number of ideas developed by "many minds... to the centuries-old basic method and its evolution," and published it in 1944 as *The Only Six Ways to Restore a Rope*, a 52-page booklet with soft cover, professionally printed. It sold for $1.50. When the book came out Larsen strongly recommended it: "You get a hundred bucks worth of information. It is far and away the best buy for the money of the month." Although it received little press in the magic publications, a second edition was required in 1945, and it was later republished unchanged by the Louis Tannen magic company with a slick cover as *Rope Eternal.* It remains in print today, sixty years later.



With the resurgence in Fitzkee's notoriety, Mulholland ran a short biographical feature in the August 1944 *Sphinx* titled "You Should Know Dariel Fitzkee." Mulholland writes, "Dariel Fitzkee puts the same keen, analytical thought into consideration of the art of magic that he, as Dariel Fitzroy the Acoustical Engineer, puts into his scientific work. He would be the first to say that engineering has far to go in acoustics, and that he has not written the final word on magician's misdirection and showmanship. There can be no question, however, that in his writings and productions he has given magicians an extraordinary amount of new approaches to the subjects of method and performance which will make his name noted in the history of the subject....

"Fitzkee takes magic very seriously and treats it as an art and a science rather than a toy... [and] his opinion is not high about those to whom magic is but a game.... He is not one to accept that because a trick was done one way in the past it must still be done that way, or even that it must be done at all. ...Magic must accept new ideas in performance far more even than new tricks."

And then Mulholland writes this: "[Dariel's] real role in magic is that of a prophet and as such he has had to accept the penalties of that opinion." We wonder where Mulholland got that concept. Was it through correspondence with Fitzkee? Recall Dariel's opening paragraph in the letter to Lloyd Jones written just a few months before: "I have long since found out that the old adage about the prophet being without honor in his own country is true. No one in this area would be interested in hearing a harangue from me." There is a poignancy in this that touches us, although we believe that Dariel never intended that anyone feel sorry for him. Still, he was vulnerable and had a sensitivity that he hid from everyone except his family. Mulholland concludes, "[Fitzkee] is well known in magic from coast to coast, personally, and by his writings known internationally...."


This photo of Dariel appeared as the frontispiece of the second book of The Trilogy, The Trick Brain.

In October and November 1944, the first ads for *The Trick Brain,* the second book of *The Trilogy,* which Fitzkee mentioned in his letter to Lloyd Jones, appeared in *The Sphinx* and *Genii.* The title is a masterpiece in marketing: *The Trick Brain.* What magician can resist that? In his advertising, Dariel claims he is presenting "one of the most astonishing achievements in magic... an automatic trick inventor.... It suggests new effects specifically. It tells you what you will need, the things you use. IT EVEN TELLS YOU HOW TO DO THE TRICK. – Yes, the actual secret. It reveals to you your own original tricks, new programs.... There is no limit to the number of tricks it will invent for you – continuously." Cloth bound, 316 printed pages – his typewriter must have been clacking away at a furious pace! The price was $10.00, making it one of the most expensive books in magic published to that date.

In fact, the book is really two books in one. The final third of the book provides the method for inventing tricks that gave the book its name, *The Trick Brain*. But the classification system detailed in the first 215 pages was his real purpose in writing the book.

For over twenty years, using his cross-reference system described in his July 1938 column in *Genii*, Dariel Fitzkee had analyzed, catalogued, categorized, and organized tricks and their methods. "The most knowledgeable man in magic," said Bill Larsen, "and the most logical." In our opinion, this cross-reference system defines Dariel Fitzkee – everything in its place and every place a specific part of the whole. Dariel Fitzkee was a born engineer. Some might call him a scientist, but that is not completely accurate. A scientist searches for new knowledge, organizing it into principles and theories, the most obvious example being the five kingdoms of living organisms, each further divided into phyla, classes, orders, families, genera, and species. Dariel obviously did that with magic. But an engineer applies science to the solution of problems, for which there is often more than one answer. Dariel Fitzkee applied the fundamentals of showmanship, the science of magic (and sometimes the art of magic, although not by design), and the psychology of magic to improving magical routines and occasionally, but only occasionally, to inventing new routines.

He was also a master of building on the concepts of others. Dariel Fitzkee had a large magic library. In interviews for the *International Magicians* shows he had claimed 1,600 books, which was probably an exaggeration. But it was certainly good sized and included the English translation (by Professor Hoffman) of *The Secrets of Conjuring and Magic* by Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin, often considered the Father of Modern Magic. In the second chapter of that book (translated in 1878), Robert-Houdin divided the art of conjuring into six branches and also devoted a short chapter to what he called "general Principles," fourteen rules of presentation and misdirection, which served as a precursor to Dariel's work. Fitzkee also read *Our Magic*, published in 1911, by David Devant and Nevil Maskelyne, two of England's most prominent magicians. While Dariel took issue with how Maskelyne divided magic into classes, sub-groups and principles or methods, the concept was a definite expansion on Robert-Houdin and certainly influenced Dariel, as well. Another system for classifying magic, this time only card tricks, was T. Page Wright's "Card Tricks Classified," published in the 1924 *Sphinx*. Later, another Englishman, Samuel H. Sharpe, provided additional insights to the theory of magic in his *Neo-Magic*, published late in 1932. Dariel also referenced Winston Freer's "Seventeen Fundamental Effects," which appeared in a 1942 issue of *The Linking Ring*.

Dariel's cross-reference file was enormous, and probably beginning in 1932, when he first read about Sam Sharpe's, Dariel began to organize his trick files into what he considered to be basic effects. By 1943, when he set out to write *The Trick Brain*, he had settled on nineteen basic effects. Most of these were similar to ones appearing in earlier classification systems; nearly everyone would include "production," "vanish," and "transposition," for example. But he did include two or three that were not obvious in earlier classifications. The first two-thirds of the book were devoted to a detailed discussion of each of the nineteen basic effects, illustrated by numerous examples. In the sixteen pages of chapter nine devoted to "transpositions," for example, at least 25 effects are discussed by name, along with several variations. In our opinion this section of the book, some 215 pages, provides a remarkable primer of historical and current magic as it was known in 1943. "The research necessary in order to evolve such an outline is tremendous," Dariel wrote. "Literally thousands of tricks, from explanations in magic books to the listings in numerous catalogues, were carefully scrutinized and weighted." He said that his original manuscript contained over 500,000 words, which he trimmed down to a manageable 100,000. "After several year's consideration..." and deciding upon his 19 categories, he was "firmly convinced that more than 99 percent of all tricks will fall within these classifications." *The Trick Brain* is, essentially, a book about mechanics, how effects are accomplished. Fitzkee wrote, "Because the mechanics of magic had never been systematized, thus making a logical approach to mechanical methods impossible, I undertook to explore this field. It, too, was untouched...."

After devoting a chapter to each of the 19 basic effects, Dariel proposed a way to devise new tricks, a kind of formula for creativity. He called it "The Trick Brain and its system of suggestions and thought stimulators." For each of the 19 basic effects, he listed a number of essential factors necessary for that effect. Also, for each of the basic effects, he presented a list of basic methods for accomplishing the effect. Finally, he suggested a list of 52 common objects as diverse as cards, traps, envelopes, bar devices, colors, etc., to be used in the effect. The essential factors for a restoration are simply a subject and the kind of destruction. A playing card could be torn into pieces, for example. Dariel listed 46 different methods for restoring the object, which means, of course, securing a duplicate. For some effects he listed as many as 52 methods – for accomplishing a penetration, for example – to as few as nine, for simulating magnetic attraction. He suggested using a shuffled deck of numbered cards to set the system in motion. For example, if the first number drawn less than 20 was 4, the basic effect would be Number 4 on the list, a transformation. Dariel lists 49 different methods for accomplishing a transformation. Let us assume the next card selected was 41 – Collapsible subject, secret passageway. Suppose the third card selected was 21. Turning to the list of objects we find the word "cages." Therefore, the task before the magician was to find some way to transform a cage into another object using a collapsible subject which would be secreted away by a secret passageway. Another card could be selected to determine what the new object would be.

Let us summarize how The Trick Brain worked: By randomly selecting cards from a shuffled deck of numbered cards, the basic effect, the essential factors, basic method, and the objects were determined; and the reader was left to devise a trick using them. It was a clever and creative concept, and it caught the imagination of the magic public. With *The Trick Brain*, Dariel had another best-seller on his hands.

What is remarkable is that The Trick Brain system, which sold the book, was no more than an intriguing addendum to the book. In a *Genii* magazine article in 1946, Fitzkee wrote, "The trick invention feature [of The Trick Brain], entirely secondary to the breakdown of mechanical methods, supplies a means of applying my research."

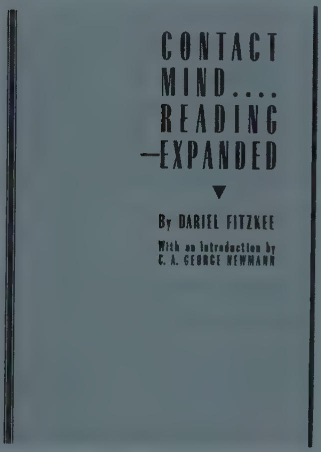
But, remembering that Dariel's own performances were always secondary to his theoretical interests in magic, it is not surprising that the mechanical device, "The Trick Brain," he created to help magicians invent original tricks, was secondary to his systematic analysis of magical effects. Did he believe in "The Trick Brain"? Yes, he thought it was a clever and interesting system, and he no doubt recognized its market value. That is why he titled the whole book *The Trick Brain.* He knew it would sell; and that is why his ads focused on the "gimmick" and not on the much larger and more important part of the book. Sam Sharpe once said that his own theoretical writings on magic were generally met with "blank apathy." His publisher, George Johnson, suggested that books of tricks would probably sell better. Magicians are magicians are magicians. They love tricks. *The Trick Brain* sold far more copies than it would have had Dariel named the book *A Complete Classification of the Mechanics of Magic!*

The Trick Brain, cloth bound with 316 pages, sold for $10.00 in 1944, the same price as the monumental *Greater Magic*, with 1,006 pages. They were the two most expensive books on the market. *Greater Magic* boasted 715 tricks. *The Trick Brain* – maybe two, if you considered Dariel's "trick brain" examples. What is that old proverb? "Give a man a fish; you feed him for today. Teach a man to fish, and you have fed him for a lifetime." The run of 1,000 was quickly sold out, and a second printing was ordered.

What follows are a few reviews that illustrate the success of the book: "I think I have never enjoyed a book quite as much. It reads like a novel but it is packed with valuable information like an encyclopedia," wrote Bill Larsen. "If it is never used for the purpose for which it was authored, still it is one of the most valuable additions to magical literature of all time."

"*The Trick Brain* is the finest single achievement ever brought to the magic world. It is a necessity for the intelligent magician... Sincere congratulations on an adult discourse." — Stuart Robson (a highly respected magic dealer in New York City).

Bob Weill and Eddie Clever, editors of *The Linking Ring* magazine magic section, wrote, "We consider The Trick Brain the most important work since Our Magic.... It is the book of the future, it is a prophecy of things to come. And Dariel, whom we consider one of the most able writers on magic, is THE PROPHET!"


CONTACT
MIND....
READING
—EXPANDED
▼
By DARIEL FITZKEE
With an Introduction by
C. A. GEORGE NEWMANN

Dariel's success with the re-write of his rope book led him to do the same with Contact Mind Reading.

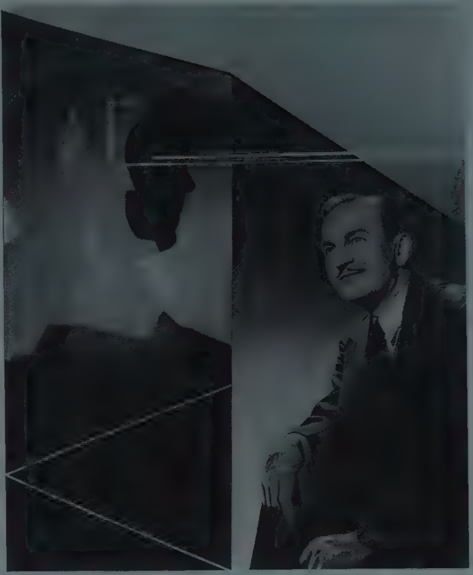
There is that "prophet" analogy again.

Even those who were critical enough to catch the flaws, such as Tom Bowyer, *The Linking Ring* book reviewer, gave begrudging praise: "It must be said that Fitzkee has not only done a generally excellent writing job but that the labor that resulted in this presentation must have been so tremendous that one can only shake a head in speechless awe."

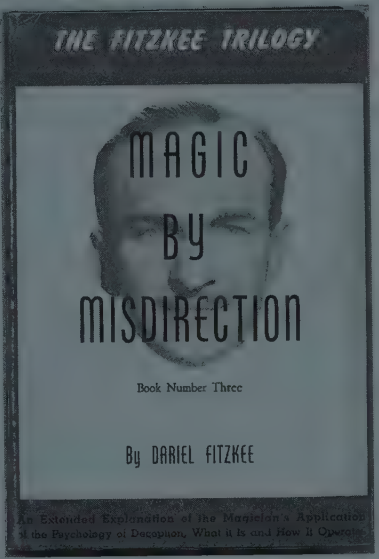
Inevitably there were those who were skeptical; can creativity really be formulated?

Dariel's success with resurrecting his old "cut and restored" manuscript into *The Only Six Ways to Restore a Rope* led him to revise his other early manuscripts. In March 1945, he published *Contact Mind Reading Expanded*, with an introduction by C. A. George Newmann, one of the "grand old men" of mind reading and mentalism. "[Contact mind reading] is the only method of apparent thought transmission which is truly psycho-physical in character," he wrote; "hence it is the closest approach to telepathy yet known." The text is essentially the same as the 1935 edition, with the addition of a preface and a three-page introductory chapter referencing a few of the personalities and methods employed over the past decade. The 38-page pamphlet was nicely printed with a soft cover, like his rope book, sold for $1.50.

Dariel continued to review books and magazines for Bill Larsen's *Genii.* He was generally true to his stated intention of describing the contents of the books he reviewed without critiquing them. "If I don't like an item," he wrote in his October 1944 column, "I'm not going to pan it. This is because I'm pretty sure I'm not as smart as I once thought I was. So rather than attack an item, I just ignore it." In his initial review column, he wrote that he planned to use his review system "more or less experimentally, simply because I myself would like to see how it might work out." By the following March, the unwieldy system was discarded. Other magic book reviewers have attempted to use similar systems from time to time, usually for limited periods of time. The challenge with a point system is that what one person might find of value another might set aside. Otherwise, these columns contain little of note other than occasional small points of interest.



This dramatic photo appeared in the front of the third book of The Trilogy, Magic by Misdirection.



THE FITZKEE TRILOGY

MAGIC BY MISDIRECTION

Book Number Three

By DARIEL FITZKEE

An Extended Explanation of the Magician's Application of the Psychology of Deception, What it Is and How It Operates

Point system aside, Dariel's reviews and his approach to the task required thorough reading and analysis. In July 1944 he notes that Bill Frazee (noted magic writer) always advises the purchaser of a new book to read it a second and third time, a point with which Fitzkee agreed. In fact, the January 1946 issue of *The Sphinx* published his article "If You Own a Magic Book," in which he elaborated on the concept of using magic books as tools. Ever the engineer, he writes, "Have you ever seen a good engineer, attorney, doctor, clergyman or other professional practitioner – I mean a good one – who does not have a comprehensive library immediately and conveniently available." A good library was fundamental to Dariel's drive for excellence in all fields, not just magic.

The year 1945 saw the publication of 1,000 copies of the third book of *The Fitzkee Trilogy, Magic by Misdirection.* "This is a book I have waited many years to write," he said. It was "a complete statement of the elements of misdirection in magic" as he saw them.

Magicians are tempted to think of misdirection as simply directing the attention of the spectator away from the method of the effect. There is much, much more to the psychology of deception than that. Fitzkee writes that, "The true skill of the magician is in the skill he exhibits in influencing the spectator's mind. This is not a thing of mechanics or digital dexterity. It is entirely a thing of psychological attack... of controlling the spectator's thinking. ... even in the face of the spectator's definite knowledge that the magician is absolutely unable to do what that spectator ultimately must admit he does.... These attacks upon the spectator take three general directions. Some of them are in the form of influencing the external appearance of what the performer is doing. Others are for the purpose of shaping the spectators' understanding. The remainder are directed at the spectator's attention."

In *Magic by Misdirection,* Fitzkee presents a thorough analysis of the psychological expedients used in controlling the spectator's mind, such concepts as simulation, dissimulation, pretense, anticipation, disguise, diversion, attention control, and much, much more. In his typical manner, Dariel Fitzkee gave his readers a detailed master course, with examples, in "Designing Miracles," to use the lovely title of the 2006 Darwin Ortiz book. If the spectator thinks of a possible method to a trick, regardless of whether or not the spectator is right, deception is defeated. The ultimate goal of any trick, Fitzkee writes, is that the audience have absolutely no idea as to how the trick is accomplished – that the audience be baffled!

Neither the mechanics of the trick – no matter how ingenious – nor the techniques, including sleight-of-hand – no matter how skillfully employed – can awe the spectator without misdirection. In and of themselves, mechanics and techniques cannot deceive; they can do nothing more than provide puzzles seeking solutions. The magician's ability to control the minds of the spectators, "that alone, is the one indispensable skill." And that is the goal of *Magic by Misdirection.*

Like the other two books of *The Trilogy,* this one was a cloth-bound publication with a simple paper cover. It was 227 pages and sold for $7.50, slightly less than the price of *The Trick Brain,* but still one of the most expensive books in magic.

It was generally well received. In his *Sphinx* review, John Mulholland wrote, "There are details brought up which seem so obvious as to be unnecessary and there are those most important details included which every magician should, and so few do, know. But it is the very fullness of the text which gives the book the great value it has. It is not a book of rules on how to be a successful magician, but it is a serious study of a necessary part of the knowledge required to be a successful magician.... Recommended for every magician, beginning or famous, and not recommended for the chap who only does, or wants to do, tricks."

Bill Woodfield, editor of "Magicana," the "magazine within a magazine" published within the pages of *Genii,* wrote, "[*Magic by Misdirection*] is the most important single work on magic that has been produced in a century."

Skeptics would point out that Bill Woodfield was a close friend and that Dariel was writing the occasional article for *The Sphinx.* Magic has always been troubled by concerns over biased reviews. But both Woodfield and Mulholland were in the public's eye, and their own reputations stood to suffer if their comments were unduly biased. Paul Fleming, widely recognized as writing the fairest and most complete reviews of the era, devoted some 1,700 words to his review, generally, but not entirely, supportive. The third book of *The Trilogy* was probably the weakest of the three books, even though its subject matter, in our opinion as well as Dariel's, was the most important. There were many redundancies, awkward paragraphs, and verbosities in the book. The more obvious points could have been shortened without eliminating them, creating more focus on those important details to which Mulholland refers. A severe edit would have helped the book considerably.

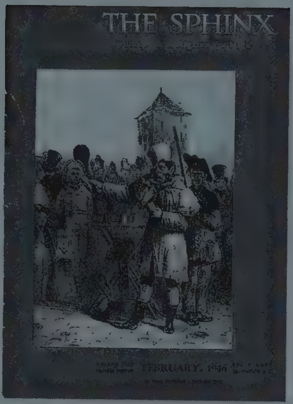
Nevertheless, Bill Larsen gave the book a great boost by running Dariel's article "Why I Have Written My Trilogy on Magic" in the September 1945 *Genii.*

Dariel Fitzkee could take criticism, but he didn't like it. And, if he felt it was unwarranted, he could not resist striking back, as we have seen with the Lloyd Jones review of the *International Magicians* show in *TOPS* magazine in 1940. In the November 1945 *The Linking Ring,* the book reviewer, Tom Bowyer, wrote a scathing review of *Magic by Misdirection,* stating that the psychological principles that Fitzkee discusses "are so elementary that any intelligent person studying conjuring can't possibly fail to realize and utilize them" and that the book imparts "so far as we can find, not even one new thought!"

Dariel was incensed! He ran full-page ads in *Genii* and *The Linking Ring* refuting Bowyer's review, point by point, comparing Bowyer's comments with those from positive reviews written by others. It was as though Dariel felt that Bowyer's review trumped all others and, by itself, could somehow reduce Dariel's standing in the world of magic. As is so often the case in such matters, it is likely that Dariel's frantic rebuttal did more to hurt his image than the Bowyer review ever could. The magic public was used to Bowyer's displays of egocentric cynicism and, while readers may have enjoyed them, they certainly kept them in perspective.

Chapter 16

Closing Doors ... Opening Doors



Dariel's article about the difficulty of earning a living as a magician appeared in this issue of The Sphinx magazine.

In February 1946, Dariel published an article titled "Stage Money" in *The Sphinx.* The purpose of the article was to warn those new to magic against believing exaggerations by some magicians about how much they earned and about giving up their studies or steady jobs to pursue magic professionally. "Few [magicians] will confess the amounts of actual fees they are paid. Painfully often, it is far too little, he wrote. "Magicians generally are among the lowest paid entertainers in show business.... You see, there is an oversupply of magicians..." He warned that it took years for a magician to get established, and perhaps one in twenty or thirty could make a living at it. While some claimed to earn as much as $500 a show, Dariel's own personal experience was that he probably never made $500 in a single month as a magician. In the article, he quotes fees a "good, capable" magician and an assistant could expect to earn in places like Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, and New York, all places where Dariel and Marcia had worked six years previously. The fees, $75 to $125 a week, would hardly provide a living for a full-time magician. "Magic is a very interesting, satisfying hobby. As a profession I would not recommend it."

Bill Larsen, who had given up a lucrative law practice to become a full-time magician and magic dealer (he owned Thayers at the time), was quick to reply in *Genii*. "I think... my good friend Dariel Fitzkee... is dead wrong. Every magician I know who wants to make a living out of magic or who wishes to supplement his income with fees from 'casuals' seems to be doing very well." Larsen went on to specify that he was talking about those who were willing to work at it, who were willing to work with their agents. "Dariel's a mighty swell guy who authors excellent books," he concludes. "But in writing on magic as a profession he's driving in the wrong direction on a one-way street."

Our guess is that Dariel was primarily reflecting his own experience, but in his reply to Bill Larsen, published in the June 1946 *Genii,* under "Fitzkee Pleads 'Not Guilty,'" he reminds Bill that he is talking about full-time professionals, not those who do "casuals." He also challenges Bill to produce facts – names can be omitted – and insists that very few magicians make what a successful plasterer, carpenter or plumber would call a good living. He ends by sharing a letter received from the wife of a "full time" magician in response to his article. "You don't know how much I've given up, excuses made to creditors and humiliation from my folks, all because my husband felt he was cut out to be a full time magician."

In that same issue of *Genii,* Larsen ran an article by John Booth titled, "Should I Make Magic My Career?" Booth had turned his back on a successful career as a society

John Booth, who had been on the Chicago Convention show with Dariel in 1940, also advised against pursuing a career in magic in Genii magazine.

magician to attend seminary and become a Unitarian Minister. Although more positive than Dariel's, Booth's article is as realistic as and more detailed than Dariel's article. Booth stresses how hard one must work, the expenses incurred that cut into income, and that "the qualities of energy, imagination, business acumen and plain ability [to be a magician] are exactly those demanded in big business." Then Booth shares his own interesting position: "The chief handicap lies in the feeling that one may not be making the best contribution to society that one can. Magic is still only the dessert on life's bill of fare...." He concludes by writing that a career in magic is good while one is young and that while doing so, one should be "expanding one's horizons beyond the confines of magic and then one day settle down [to some more serious endeavor] rich in memories, broadened in outlook, wealthier in friendships, more tolerant toward others." Further defense of Dariel's belief comes from Mulholland in the May 1946 *Sphinx*: "Fitzkee wrote on the subject of the monetary side of professional magic and he has the ability as a writer to stick to his topic and not wander afield. He clarified the financial side of the business and cleared up the exaggerated idea many people have of the money the average magician receives." These are issues that have always been and always will be a part of magic. Perhaps Dariel should have recognized the fact that there are compensations in being a professional magician other than monetary return. But tact was seldom one of Dariel's strong points, and his scientist's mind demanded that his point not be diluted.

The Trilogy was widely read and highly respected. "Mark my words," Bill Larsen wrote in 1947, "*The Fitzkee Trilogy* will grow in literary and magical stature as the years pass on. Even today thinking magicians appreciate these works more than when they were first published." Robert Orben, the well-known author of jokes and gag lines for magicians and comedians, conducted a readers' poll in *Genii* in 1949, with a real effort to also reach as many magicians outside of the *Genii* sphere of influence as possible. An estimated 5,000-plus magicians were polled, with a return of around five percent, which is about average even today for mail polls. *The Trilogy* ranked fifth behind *Greater Magic* and the Tarbell series, which tied for first, the Hoffman Trilogy, and Sach's *Sleight of Hand*, and ahead of such excellent books as Erdnase's *Expert at the Card Table*, Downs' *Art of Magic*, *The Memoirs of Robert-Houdin*, and thirty-some other books. Dariel's were the only books listed whose focus was primarily on theory.

The Trilogy books became the books one loved to argue against, especially *The Trick Brain*, and a kind of positive controversy floated through the magic magazines for months after its publication. England's Wilfred Johnson and France's Victor Farelli, both esteemed European magicians, appreciated *The Trick Brain* for Fitzkee's primary purpose, a classification of magic. They saw "The Trick Brain" part of the book for what it was, as commercially provocative. Still, they both strongly advised the reader to study the book from cover to cover. But Trevor Hall, another well-known British magician, expressed dismay in an *ABRA* article at Fitzkee's "over-enthusiastic followers in this country [England]."

Bill Larsen himself said that he agreed with about seventy percent of what Fitzkee

Vol. 26
No. 2
Dave & Pauline Coleman
The Linking Ring
APRIL 1946

the Fitzkee Parade
COMPILED BY
BOB WEILL and
EDDIE CLEVER

Dariel's ideas were the theme of a special Linking Ring Trick Parade in the April, 1946 issue.

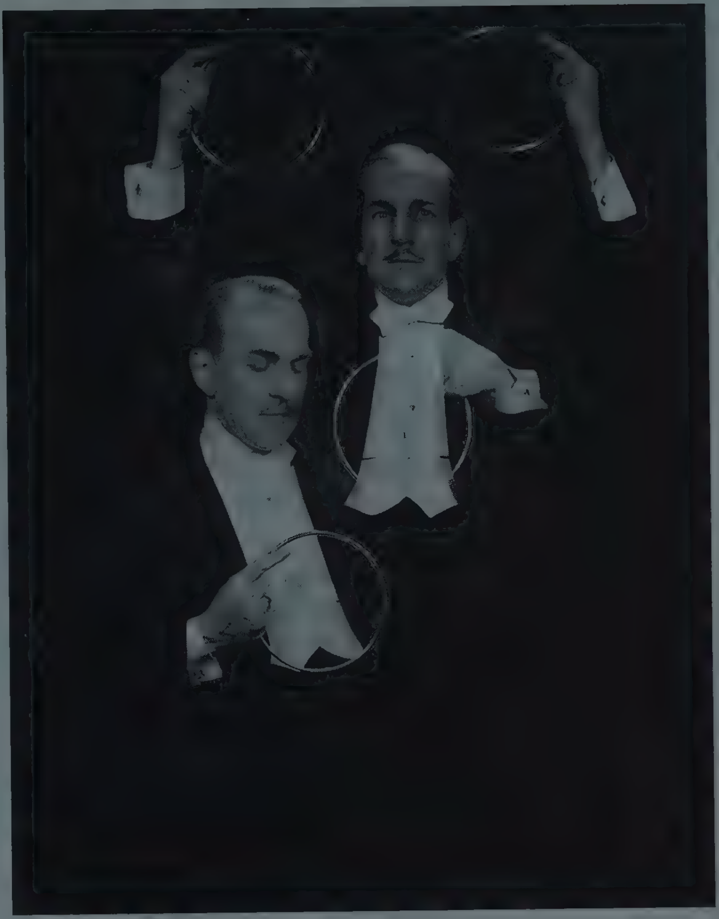
wrote and would wrestle him for the rest of it. On the other hand, Eddie Clever and Bob Weill were positively smitten by Fitzkee, referring to him as the prophet of modern magic. They quoted from him often in 1945 and 1946, and the April 1946 *The Linking Ring* featured a "Parade," the magazine's magic section, devoted to tricks created through application of *The Trick Brain* or other of Fitzkee's writings.

The popularity of *The Trick Brain* convinced George Johnson and Sam Sharpe, in England, to publish a new edition of 750 copies of Sharpe's *Neo Magic* in 1946. According to Sharpe (as reported in *Art and Magic*, published by The Miracle Factory), only 180 copies of the first edition had been sold, the balance of 320 having been destroyed in the Blitz. About the same time, the Fleming Book Company published a new edition of Maskelyne and Devant's *Our Magic*, which had been out of print for almost forty years. Both of those books, the reader might recall, were precursors to Fitzkee's classification system in *The Trick Brain.*

Dariel varied from his usual procedure when reviewing *Our Magic* in the August 1946 *Genii*: "Better minds than mine have called this a great work. Perhaps you will agree. Many intelligent magicians are most enthusiastic in their praise. They are probably right. Many of my own books have been compared with this work. Undoubtedly there is something the matter with me, but this work has always left me colder than a mackerel. The text to me seems vague, ineffectual, short on clarifying illustrative reference, wordy and rambling. That is my confession." His stated policy was to not review a book, rather than pan it. Why, then, was he so hard on an acknowledged classic? Perhaps it was difficult for him to share the podium of magic theory even with Maskelyne and Devant. It is also interesting to note that his critique of Maskelyne's writing style is very similar to what his own critics wrote about *his* style.

Dariel was invited to write an editorial for *ABRACADABRA*, the only magical weekly in the world, published by Goodliffe in England. Dariel may have taken some delight in being controversial. In the October 19, 1946, issue he wrote, "I think that the thing which breathes life into an interest in magic carries with it the seeds of its death. To be good magicians, I believe, we must constantly fight the latter or be destroyed by it." What are those seeds of death? "The tendency, generally, regardless of country or language, to hide away and to assiduously practice intricate sleights he will never use, to practice tricks he will never perform and to keep essaying new tricks to the detriment of those he regularly performs.... Is it possible that this egotism, which supplies the irresistible urge to do things in magic, is invariably accompanied by a complete, and fatal, total blindness to the possibility of failure? I think it is." Clearly, Dariel Fitzkee's low opinion of and lack of tolerance for the average magic hobbyist had not diminished.

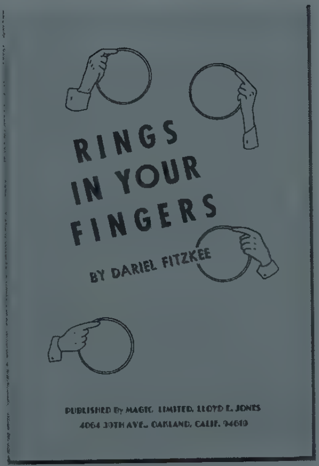
In 1946, with *The Trilogy* behind him, Dariel turned to another of his old manuscripts, *Linking Ring Manipulation*, published in 1930. *Rings In Your Fingers*, the cloth-bound, greatly expanded version, "dedicated to my daughter Marcia Adair, who positively detests magic,"



Dariel used this creative photograph as the frontispiece of his 1946 book, Rings in Your Fingers, greatly expanded from the Linking Ring Manipulation manuscript of 15 years before.

was released later that year. With 120 pages, it did not resemble the old manuscript at all. For one thing, it had a large section devoted to the figures that could be made with the rings, whereas in the earlier manuscript Fitzkee stated that he believed the figures detracted from the magic of the rings. He had not changed his mind, however, and warned that the figures, probably devised as time killers, were in reality entertainment killers. "Because this is a book on the ring trick, in the interests of completeness they are included here. My culpability ends with their explanation. Whether you use them, and how you use them is entirely your fault."

The book is quite good and treats the "ring trick" in Dariel's usual detail, explaining methods and variations for the several linkings, unlinkings, exchanges and substitutions, and simulations and handling of the "key" ring. "There has been a great need," he wrote, "for a basic textbook on The Chinese Linking Rings." His purpose was to provide "a complete text on methods, mechanical devices, moves, techniques, figures, artifices, routines, etc., for performing one of the great classics in the repertoire of magic. It includes modern improvements, suggestions, and ideas, together with routines eliminating the use of the key." Dariel did draw from many sources, and there are explanations of specific "moves" credited to a dozen or so performers, as well as several books and magazine articles. One of the most interesting chapters comes at the end of the book where Dariel reprints Ellis Stanyon's explanation of the Chung Ling Soo routine as witnessed in the Hippodrome, London, in November 1903, as it was printed in the December, 1903 issue of Stanyon's magazine, MAGIC. This reprint is followed by outlines of a number of routines by Stanyon himself, as well as by Robert-Houdin, Edwin Sachs, Professor Hoffman, Blackstone, Eugene Laurant, Farelli, Fitzkee himself, and others. *Rings In Your Fingers* is still available on used books lists and still has value today for anyone interested in exploring "The Chinese Linking Rings." In 1946 it



RINGS IN YOUR FINGERS

BY DARIEL FITZKEE

PUBLISHED BY MAGIC, LIMITED, LLOYD E. JONES
4064 39TH AVE., OAKLAND, CALIF. 94619

The
CARD EXPERT
ENTERTAINS
by Dariel Fitzkee

Although The Card Expert Entertains grew out of Dariel's original Buckley book, it far exceeded it in content. This was "The Trick Brain" of card magic.

was an outstanding addition to the magic literature and sold for $5.00.

By now, Dariel's nemesis at *The Linking Ring,* Tom Bowyer, had stepped down as book reviewer. His replacement, J. G. Thompson, Jr., who had recently published the very successful book *My Best* (to which Dariel contributed two routines) wrote a positive review of *Rings In Your Fingers,* as did others, stating that the book would be a text for the rings for years to come.

In May 1947, Dariel gave Arthur Buckley's book *Card Control* a strong review, based on "a thorough reading, including working every sleight and trick in it." Then he added, "Personally, I don't think the tricks are as good as the thirty Buckley items published some years ago." This referred to his own publication, *Improved and Original Card Problems.* "The latter should have been included and I myself would have offered them to Buckley had I known he was putting this work out." But he did not, and now the new Buckley book was in print. Eight months later, Dariel's *The Card Expert Entertains* was published, inspired, we feel certain, by the publication of Buckley's *Card Control,* but also by a comment at about the same time by George Armstrong, editor of Britain's *The Magic Wand* magazine. Following a lengthy article about Fitzkee in that magazine, Armstrong wrote about *Improved and Original Card Problems*: "I would like to see it produced in book form and copiously illustrated." Perhaps that was the incentive that moved Dariel to write *Card Expert.*

There are some who believe this was Dariel's best work. "Just finished the proofs of Dariel Fitzkee's latest, *The Card Expert Entertains,*" wrote his protégé, Bill Woodfield, in his "Intermission" column in the March 1948 *Genii,* "Like all of his books, this ONE TASTES OF REVOLUTION." A very telling comment. Consider that Dariel was not interested in adding tricks to the world's supply. He was interested in improving magic. Theory was his passion, even with card tricks. "The first six chapters are worth the price of the book alone," continued Woodfield. "In these chapters, Fitzkee rudely shocks the reader into realizing that card tricks can be boring. Then with his usual analytical aptitude he presents a breakdown of card sleights."

This was *The Trick Brain* for card workers. Building on the late T. Page Wright's taxonomy of fourteen card effects published in the May 1924 *Sphinx,* Dariel suggested that every card trick ever invented can be classified as one of nineteen such effects, including causing a card or cards to materialize; causing them to disappear; causing them to penetrate matter or be penetrated; to be restored after being torn or burnt; etc. (Interestingly, Dariel does not credit Wright in this book, although he did earlier in *The Trick Brain.*) In some cases the devices and stratagems used to accomplish these aims or effects include mechanical apparatus, and he refers the reader to *The Trick Brain* for details. Fitzkee explains that this book, *The Card Expert,* will consider the sixteen accomplishments he discovered "when [he] boiled down that staggering array of passes, steals, keys, shuffles, cuts, deals, changes and the like." These include such things as discovering the identity of a certain card or card; retaining the knowledge of the card's, or cards', whereabouts; secretly reversing a card or cards; etc. The point he makes in these early chapters is that card magicians tend to be caught up in the sleights, always looking for a new variation on an old one – "the seeds of death" he mentioned in his *ABRA* editorial. The results are invariably technical skill over entertainment. In the early pages of the book, he wrote, "The most essential ingredient of all – perhaps the only factor necessary – is to be able to make the trick highly entertaining." And then, "You may note that, for the moment, I am back at the same old stand, torch lighted, pitching the same old medicine."

In his revisitation of Buckley's thirty card problems in *The Card Expert Entertains,* Dariel teaches the basic sleights necessary for accomplishing the tricks, along with occasional alternative sleights when the initial ones are difficult. These had not been a part of the earlier work. "The sleights should be learned – and executed – as part of that specific trick," he wrote. "No attention should be given to them as individual moves." He wrote that he decided to "write his card book around those [Buckley's] well-designed routines," because, as he reminded the reader and as he had often opined before, there were too many card tricks already. While this reason perhaps has merit, the fact is that Dariel's forte was not in inventing tricks. Only one card trick appears in print under his name alone, and its several parts are not unlike other effects that were already in print. Dariel's reason can be taken at face value or considered a possible convenient excuse. But we must acknowledge his excellent descriptions of the sleights used in these tricks. He knew his card work! As Woodfield admonished, "Don't forget the first six chapters, and you will glean a lot more practical knowledge from a book than you thought possible."

The Card Expert Entertains was initially published in early 1947 by Saint Rafael Press as a 171-page, paperbound book, selling for $3.50. A second printing, many years later, was cloth bound. We are not sure why Dariel chose to publish the first edition in paper, unless he feared that most of the magic public would simply consider it a book of card tricks and that $5.00 would be thought too expensive. Perhaps his experience with *Rings In Your Fingers* influenced his decision. We do not know what the initial sales of *Rings* were. It might be that it had been slow to sell, which perhaps he blamed on the relatively high cost. The only way to keep the price of his card book down, which had fifty more pages than the Rings book, was to cover it in paper.

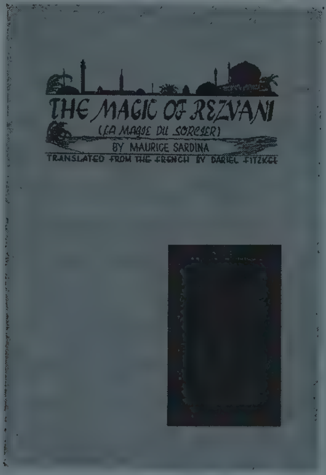
That was fine with the magic public, and the reviews were strong. In his April 1947 *Sphinx* review, Mulholland wrote, "This reviewer is a Fitzkee fan, so it is meant to be a great compliment when I say that this is one of his best books." J.G. Thompson Jr. said that he "enjoyed reading [a] book by a man who faces facts realistically. I think you will too, but he can't fool me with his final explanation of the purpose for preparing the work (which he stated was to help the reader see that interest, fortitude and industry to persist in learning the sleight required, and aptitude were the real secrets of becoming an expert with cards). "What you really want to get across," concluded Thompson, "is that the true Card Expert ENTERTAINS, isn't it, D.F.?"

Arthur Buckley's book *Card Control* sold well in the States, and he followed it a year later with *Principles and Deceptions.* Whereas Dariel had reviewed *Card Control* quite favorably, he was very harsh on *Principles and Deceptions* in his August 1948 review. "This is an essay purporting to discuss such things as basic principles, effects, psychological factors, entertainment, showmanship, inventions, presentations and such," he wrote. "Since it opposes many of the views I've expressed at various times, of course, *I disagree with practically all of it where I can understand Mr. Buckley's specific points.* (Italics added.) I don't think that essay writing is one of Mr. Buckley's strong fortes. Chapter three... opens with a discussion on card tricks in which he questions my claim that card tricks are either good or bad. Mr. Buckley argues that 'if it is an illusion, then it is good... because card tricks that are illusions must be good to be illusions.' To me that is pure yak." Remember Dariel's policy of simply not reviewing books with which he disagreed? Remember that he could not resist giving a negative review to the new edition of *Our Magic?* Once again he cannot resist panning a book that disagrees with his books on theory.

In November 1946, Fitzkee had reviewed a book written in French "but of such general excellence that it should be translated and issued in English." Three years later, in early 1949, Fitzkee published the English version of the book, *La Magie Du Sorcier* by Maurice Sardina, translated by Fitzkee from the French. The book, written by Sardina, was highly acclaimed in France by Dr. J. Dhjotel, President of the l'Association Francaise des Artistes Prestidigitatours. It presented the novel tricks, tips, ideas and moves of an Iranian magician by the name of Medjid Kan Rezvani, who had been a sensation among the magicians of Paris in the mid-forties. It contained several pages of card tricks, including reading the faces of cards by means of a shiner inserted in the tip of a cigarette, a novel card-to-wallet, several mental effects, and a chapter on a cups-and-balls routine that Rezvani performed as a street magician using Oriental-style cups and balls routine with tomatoes while seated on the sidewalk. Dariel especially liked the cups and balls routine. Dhotel said that Rezvani's experience and knowledge of audience psychology had led him "to effects which are both striking and practical."

The Magic of Rezvani by Maurice Sardina, translated by Dariel Fitzkee, was to be Dariel's last magic book. It was 89 pages in length, had a soft board cover, and sold for $3.50. The book was not exceptional, and J. G. Thompson's recommendation was a luke-warm "worth-while book and therefore recommended."

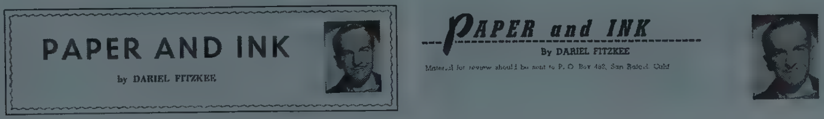
But "the rest of the story" is so delightfully, typically Dariel Fitzkee that it sets the book apart and makes it worthy of note in this biography. His review of the original book in French had been somewhat general, but in the foreword to his translation, Dariel wrote, "[After] reading the book in French... arrangements were made... for Saint Raphael House to bring out a version in English, and the author requested that I act as the translator." The implication is that Dariel was fluent in French, or at least could read French fluently. He doesn't say so expressly, but why else would Sardina request Dariel to translate the book. Most likely any experience with the French language Dariel had, if any, was in LaSalle High School, and we have no confirmation of that. Latin was the general foreign language taught in public schools in the early 1900s. In fact, in his *ABRA* editorial, written in October 1946, a month before the review appeared in *Genii,* he wrote, "On my desk as I write is a copy of *La Magie du Sorcier* by Maurice Sardina, in French.... As might be suspected, my French has suffered from years of neglect. As a matter of fact, it never was too robust, I must confess. Yet I find myself reading this book...." His daughter, Marcia, who was about eighteen in 1946, told us that Dariel did not know French, that he taught himself the language just so he could translate the book. Dariel did not acknowledge his limited knowledge in the American magic press – he was not about to admit to any weakness! But such was his intellect that he learned the language while translating the book. A strong and admirable character trait was his determination to do whatever it took to live up to his own image.



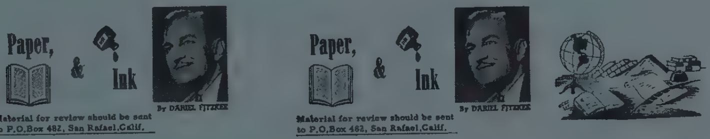
Dariel taught himself French to translate the Rezvani book.

The translation was not perfect, but Dariel was quick to defend his work. In *The Magic Circular,* published by The Magic Circle in London, the editor commented, "Talking of books, Dariel Fitzkee writes that the critics in his part of the world have taken a few shots at him for his attempt to preserve the French character of Rezvani's book when he translated it. Speaking personally, I prefer a translation that way. 'To me,' writes Mr. Fitzkee, 'that was one of the chief charms of the original Sardina work – like, for example, fish-mouth shuffle for riffle shuffle. Actually,' he continues, 'could I have dared to turn it out the way I wanted, it would have been in as near literal English equivalents as possible – twisted around verbs and adjectives and so on, including literal translations of idioms [like the fish-mouth shuffle]'."

Dariel was invited by his friend Bill Woodfield to write a guest editorial in Woodfield's June 1948 "Intermission" column in "Magicana," the magazine within *Genii* magazine. "There is a lot of mystery as to just who were the hosts at a recent party given for Frackson and Le Paul in San Francisco," Ftizkee wrote. "It seems that some of the members of the club that was rumored to be sponsoring it weren't invited. The left-outs were burned, of course. So they're watching to see whether the particular club is presented with any bills. You should see the misdirection going on. Incidentally, this is not a new shenanigan with this particular group. It ain't the club's fault, but some of the members have a genius for finagling things to their own advantage." Then he wrote, "Brother, do I know." We're sure he recollected that in years gone by, he and Marcia had been the ones to host visiting magicians of note, with their doors open to all. The scars were certainly very thin and the wounds still painful in 1948.


PAPER AND INK
by DARIEL FITZKEE
PAPER and INK
By DARIEL FITZKEE

Dariel's first book review column appeared in the March,1944, Genii, and was changed slightly in August 1946.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By DARIEL FITZKEE
Material for review should be sent to P.O.Box 462, San Rafael,Calif.
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By DARIEL FITZKEE
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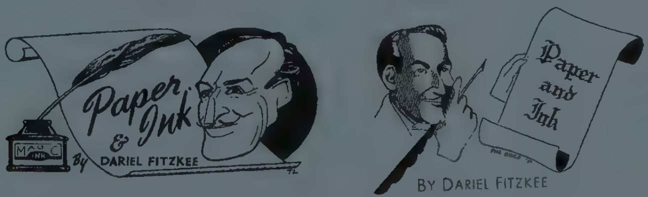
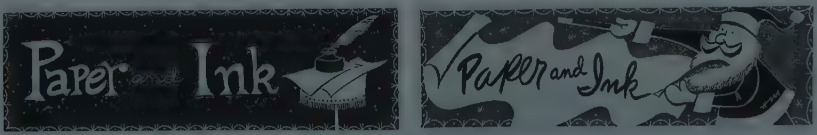
This column heading first appeared in March, 1948. In July by the image of the world image was added. This ran through December, 1949.


Paper & Ink
By DARIEL FITZKEE
Paper and Ink
BY DARIEL FITZKEE

This Tom Lawless caricature ran from January 1950 through September 1955. It was followed by this superb Phil Bauer caricature that ran only once, in October, 1955. This rather unimaginative column heading (below) ran from November, 1955 until Dariel stepped down in August, 1956, with the exception of the Santa Clause heading that appeared in the December, 1955 issue.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Chapter 17

Transition

In January 1948, Dariel was surprised to receive a letter from Okito's son, David Bamberg, who was famous in Mexico, and Central and South America as the magician Dr. Fu Manchu. Bamberg had read *The Trick Brain* and liked it very much. He believed that the future of magic lay in the revue and musical comedy field, and his purpose in writing was simply to establish a correspondence with Dariel, and perhaps share some ideas. Bamberg had not read *Showmanship for Magicians,* and one wonders if Okito had sent him copies of early reviews of the *International Magicians* show. He did say that his father occasionally sent him copies of *The Sphinx.*

Dariel was delighted to respond and sent Bamberg a copy of the *Showmanship* book. While waiting for the book, Bamberg wrote again, sharing his ideas and concerns about the big revue he was planning for Mexico City. Then, a month later he wrote that he was letting the matter of the musical comedy drop for a time. "It can only be done by creating all new tricks and illusions to fit the story," he wrote. Of course, that was the drawback of musical comedy with a main story line that runs throughout the show. Fitzkee would have agreed that it was difficult. In the *International Magicians* show, the story line had been very weak by design as the show was built around acts that were already developed. Several letters between Bamberg and Dariel were exchanged in 1948 and then none for almost five years.

Dariel wrote two articles for *The Sphinx* in 1949. The first, "Magic Literature?" is a protest against the dearth of literary merit in magic literature at the time and the surfeit of what he called "cook book writing," simply collections of trick recipes. A primary reason for this, he maintained, was that the authors had the wrong motivation. They were writing simply to make money. While he was never one to object to making money, he did feel that if it was the only reason for writing, the result would inevitably be a poor book. The primary objective, he said, must be to contribute something to the craft of magic. Left unsaid was that the primary objective of Dariel's books was always just that – to make a difference. He and Bay Area friend Charles Nyquist "were gabbing at random the other day" and set about listing those milestone books that changed the face of magic: Sach's *Sleight of Hand;* Gaultier's *Magic Without Apparatus;* Erdnase's *The Expert at the Card Table;* the Hoffman books, *Modern Magic, More Magic* and *Later Magic;* Downs's *The Art of Magic* (written by Hilliard), The Tarbell Course and Hilliard's *Greater Magic.* They supposed that Robert-Houdin's *The Secrets of Conjuring* should be included and that others would insist on Maskelyne and Devant's *Our Magic,* although neither Dariel nor Nyquist thought so. Perhaps in time, they mused, some of Hugard's books would be considered milestones and maybe Glenn Gravatt's *Encyclopedia of Card Tricks* just because of its sheer size. Certainly discussed, but not mentioned in Fitzkee's commentary, was *The Fitzkee Trilogy.*

The second of Dariel's articles, "The Magic Reader and Writer," appeared in the

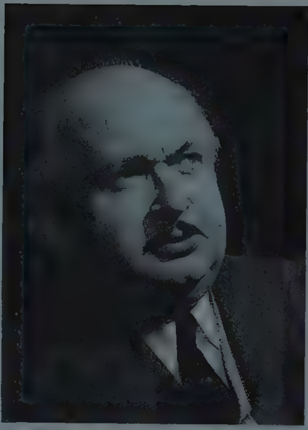
September 1949 issue of *The Sphinx*. It is rather poorly written and simply restates the old and obvious message that books should be read more than once to fully understand the message and reminds the reader of his old system for reviewing books.

GENII
THE CONJURORS' MAGAZINE
VOLUME 14
JANUARY 1950
NUMBER 5
Happy New Year
DARIEL FITZKEE

Victor Farelli's "Paris Notes" column in the April 1949 *Sphinx* commented on an article Dariel had contributed to *Le Magicien*, France's premier magic magazine. "The author deals, in his usual vigorous style, with... present day magicians [in the States] and their failings, but wisely, I think, mentions no names." Farelli stated that he had understood there to be several first-rate magicians in America, and he was surprised to read Dariel's comments. "Another of my youthful illusions destroyed!" Farelli wrote. He emphasized this by stressing that, according to Fitzkee, Thurston had been the only thoroughly up-to-date illusionist in America, which he was until he died. Furthermore, Fitzkee claimed that box office receipts prove that "professional performers are out-of-date both in their style and in their repertoire...." Then Fitzkee concluded his article by reiterating the hope that magicians would "cease their mad quest for new tricks...." Two months later, Farelli reported that Fitzkee had written him finding fault with the French translation of his article. Fitzkee specifically wanted to stress that even Thurston fell out of date several years before his death and, at the end, his show was no longer a first-class attraction. "Still another of my youthful illusions destroyed!" wrote Farelli. "I was under the impression that the Great Thurston Show was always enormously successful."

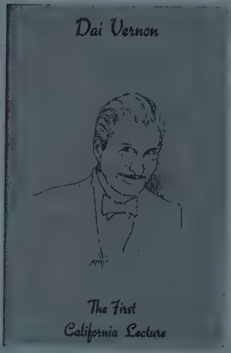
We are quite sure that Farelli was writing tongue-in-cheek about his illusions of Thurston and other American magicians being destroyed by what Fitzkee wrote. Instead, we think that it was Farelli's impressions of Dariel that were being destroyed by Dariel's cynical writing. Two years earlier, in 1947, Victor Farelli wrote a glowing tribute to Dariel Fitzkee that covered several pages in *The Magic Wand*, a British magazine published by George Johnson (publisher of *Neo Magic*) from 1914 to 1945 and by George Armstrong from 1945 to 1957. One detects a more tarnished image in Farelli's comments in 1949.

As a new decade loomed on the horizon, Dariel Fitzkee was nearing the end of his active role as a writer of magic books and articles. Even though Bill Larsen featured him on the cover of January, 1950 *Genii*, and although he would continue to write reviews for *Genii* until August 1956, he was gradually removing himself from the magic scene. He occasionally attended a magic convention or some special event and even had a dealer booth at the P.C.A.M. Convention in Hollywood in 1949. He also attended the P.C.A.M. the following year in Oakland, and the combined I.B.M. – S.A.M. Convention in Chicago the summer of 1950, all noted briefly in his magazine reports and columns. "One of the highlights of the Chicago convention," he wrote, "was seeing Dr. Jaks work. This man is ter-



Dariel greatly admired the work of Dr. Jaks, whom Dariel met at the 1950 Chicago S.A.M. - I.B.M. convention. Dai Vernon was a friend from the days Dariel spent in New York City. He attended Vernon's first West Coast lecture in 1947.

rific. He dresses each trick in its own setting and with a unique presentation makes it a classic. I saw one woman spectator turn pale at the conclusion of one of his routines during which he employed a marked deck and a 'Brain Wave' deck. Such are the fruits of showmanship." Jaks was one of the most unique entertainers of his time whose props were carefully selected to both charm the audience and enhance the mystery of his effects. He also mentions attending the P.C.A.M. Convention in Oakland in 1954, and it is possible that he attended other conventions, but we could find no mention of them.

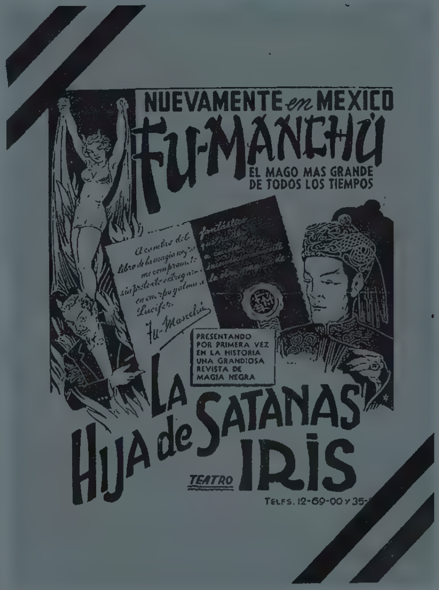


In 1947, he did attend Dai Vernon's first West Coast lecture, held at Tom Dethlefsen's Golden Gate Magic Shop and took notes, which would later appear as the first half of *Dai Vernon, The First California Lecture,* published in 1976 by Jeff Busby. Busby credited Fitzkee with the text, which reports the lecture in excellent depth, both presentations and methods. While some detail is no doubt missing, the book reads very well. Although Fitzkee was still alive in 1976, the notes were written at the time of the lecture and had been obtained by Busby. Fred Braue added his notes on three items performed at the Sacramento lecture that were not covered in San Francisco, and Busby added over five pages of detailed bibliography to provide a hardbound book of 22 pages.

In early 1952, Dariel, Charles Nyquist, and Doug Kelley attended the Okito lecture at the Golden Gate Magic Company. Obviously he was selective about his magic activities, and, as we have stated before, we never found a mention of him in the reports of the Golden Gate Assembly No. 2 or the Oakland Magic Circle after 1940. He might have attended the occasional lecture by one of his old friends, but never a club meeting. Tom Dethlefsen, owner of the Golden Gate Magic Co., remained a good friend. In fact, a Golden Gate Magic Co. ad in the March, 1949 *Genii,* advertises the Conradi "Cube-A-Libre," or "magic cubes" trick with a special comedy routine by Dariel. This was the only occasion we know of where Dariel lent his name to promote something like that.

Early in 1953, David Bamberg resumed his correspondence with Dariel from Medellin, Colombia. Bamberg had been out of magic for a while, he wrote, and had opened a color studio for commercial photography. "One has to get out of show business for a time in order not to be stale," he wrote. He had a keen interest in photography, both still and movies, and was the popular star of six Fu Manchu movies filmed and released in Mexico between 1943 and 1949. "In the meantime," he continued, "I dream up new ideas for the show. For years I have wanted to combine song and dance with magic.... Maybe here I'll be able to lick the problems.... What is your reaction... what would you advise?"

A few months later, Dariel replied, apologizing for being so late. "I wanted to think [your letter] over and, of course, ...I hated to confess that I am not as smart as you apparently misunderstand me to be." He then wrote that a show such as Bamberg outlined "could be a magnificent vehicle for gently reminding us of the inconsistencies, the weaknesses, the paradoxes, the feeble objectives, the whole gamut of characteristics that seem to make up man and life.... We had a touch of what I mean in our doll House presentation [in the *International Magicians* show]. The man-of-the-world revealed, at the moment of vital importance...."


NUEVAMENTE en MEXICO
FU-MANCHU
EL MAGO MAS GRANDE DE TODOS LOS TIEMPOS
Fu-Manchu
PRESENTANDO POR PRIMERA VEZ EN LA HISTORIA UNA GRANDIOSA REVISTA DE MAGIA NEGRA
LA HIJA de SATANAS
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Dariel and David Bamberg (Fu Manchu) developed a great friendship by mail. Below is the Bamberg's program for the Satan's Daughter show.

Bamberg responded with the detailed outline of what was to be his greatest artistic show, *Satan's Daughter,* part morality play, part science fiction, filled with music and dance choreographed as ballet and strange, weird props and stage designs by Edmund Spreer. Dariel could not immediately find the time to consider all that Bamberg had sent him, but after a second letter from Bamberg a month later, he did so, making several plot suggestions. Bamberg replied, "Dear Dariel, what a sweet switch you sent me. I'm going to try and change the opening of the show if I have the time. The idea [about eliminating a chance meeting between Fu Manchu and the Devil and substituting a pact between the two of them] is beautiful. It's just the one thing I needed to round the show out. Thanks a million."

This must have been very gratifying for Dariel. At a time when he might have begun to worry about his standing in the American and European magic communities, here was fresh validation from South America's greatest illusionist.

Satan's Daughter ran for three months at the Iris Theatre in Mexico City. Press critiques were mixed, and Bamberg made several changes to improve the show. In his book *Illusion Show,* Bamberg states that he could not put his finger on the weak spot. When he took the show out to a few of the other large Mexican cities, he found he couldn't make expenses. He had a large cast and traveled a fifteen-piece orchestra. He had cut the show considerably and eliminated much of what he considered to be most artistic. Later, in 1960, in his home city of Buenos Aires, Argentina, he rewrote *Satan's Daughter,* correcting a number of flaws, and produced the show once again. "From that moment the show ran like a dream," he wrote, "and broke all of [my] records in Buenos Aires by running for almost ten months." In the plot of the show, Bamberg, as Dr. Fu Manchu, fell in love with Satan's daughter. In one of the sketches, which Bamberg reports was quite successful, Fitzkee's *Magic in the Air* Doll House routine was used in the scene titled "Fifi in Paris," in which the Devil causes a skimpily clad vamp to appear [from the Doll House] in an effort to sidetrack Fu Manchu's romance with his daughter. The correspondence between Dariel and David Bamberg has unfortunately become lost. We are fortunate, however, that Stephen Tigner preserved much of it in Volume 1, Number 3 of *The Journal of Magic History,* November 1979, in an article titled the "Origins of Fu Manchu's 'Satan's Daughter'

Show." Bamberg always gave Dariel full credit for his contributions, which is also recorded in Robert E. Olson's book, *Illusion Builder to Fu-Manchu* (David Bamberg), *A Tribute to Edmund Spreer.*

The decade of the forties was momentous for Dariel Fitzkee in many ways. Of course, as we have seen, he rose from the ashes to the heights of magical acclaim, in spite of a few detractors. He was still the most knowledgeable, the most logical man in magic. It was a successful decade for Dariel Fitzroy, as well. Throughout the early forties, he gained a reputation as a knowledgeable acoustical engineer, working on numerous projects for the J. L. Stuart Company. With the end of World War II, he turned his efforts from acoustical cells for airplane engine test buildings to school auditoriums, classrooms, gymnasiums and churches.

During the war, Dariel's wife, Marcia, had taken a job in the clerical department of Madden & Lewis, Shipbuilders, a small shipyard in Sausalito that built sub chasers instead of yachts during the war. After the war she was mainly a stay-at-home housewife and mother, but served her community as PTA President, as a nurse's aide at Ross General Hospital (which she had also done at Hamilton AFB hospital during the war), and was active in a program helping troubled adolescents. She took all of those responsibilities seriously. Daughter Marcia recalls an occasion when her mother, then president of the PTA, felt that the local chief of police had contributed to the death of a student through negligence. She took on him and City Hall with a vengeance. "One of the highlights of Daddy's life," says Marcia, "was the fact that after her mother had 'wiped up the town with the chief,' the chief sent her mother a Christmas card every year until he retired." During her high school years, daughter Marcia was close to her father and remembers him as a caring father and husband. "Daddy was absolutely devoted to my mother," she has said. "There was never a morning that he didn't tell my mother how lucky he was to have her, how beautiful she was and how much he loved her. I thought that's what all husbands did." And then with a smile and a glance at her husband, Bill Dobbs, "I found out!" But Dariel was a perfectionist in everything he did, and he had a hard time accepting anything less than perfection in those around him. "He did lose patience," Marcia has said. "When I was in high school taking geometry, I was totally befuddled; and it was the same with college chemistry. Mother would insist that my father help me with the math or chemistry homework. This usually ended up with my father shouting, 'How can you be so stupid?' and me in tears." (As a father, I do not find this frustration so unusual!) Marcia continued, "My first driving lesson resulted in his yelling, 'Get out of the car!' I had misunderstood his parallel parking instructions and ran over a bunch of rocks and into a tree. That was also my last driving lesson from him." We must add that these anecdotes are all recollected with a smile. "My father showed great patience while mentoring his young protégés in magic," Marcia explained. "I think he felt that my 'stupidity' in mathematics somehow reflected on him. My mother was never the recipient of these flares. As far as he was concerned, she could do no wrong."

By 1946, Dariel was doing well enough that the family moved from a rental house in San Rafael to their own house at 27 Foothill Blvd., in San Anselmo, about five miles west of San Rafael. Dariel's goal was to design his own house, but, due to wartime shortages, home building was still a few years away. The San Anselmo house was small, but always filled with friends and fun. Marcia graduated high school and was off to the College of Marin the following fall, and in 1947, Dariel left J. L. Stuart and started his own business, Fitzroy Acoustics. Dariel always maintained that he was the first independent acoustical consultant in the world! For the first few years as a consulting acoustical engineer, he worked out of an office in his home, but in time he set up an office in San Rafael. In 1951, daughter Marcia, who had graduated from The University of California at Berkely the previous June, married Billy Dale Dobbs, and Dariel and Marcia moved into a new home that Dariel had designed at 50 Montecito Road in San Rafael.

Dariel and Marcia were very involved in their community, hosting social gatherings and participating in a variety of activities. Marcia served as president of the San Raphael Improvement Club, a service organization. "Madame President," Dariel called her, and the two of them were members of The Ross Valley Players, an active little theater group. They had joined the "Players" in the early forties, and Dariel was in his element assisting the group in staging their annual theatrical offerings of a drama and a most-looked-for "Duffy's Tavern," a wild and wooly review. The RVP also put on shows for the many military groups stationed throughout the county. Dariel frequently performed his comedy Mexican act on those shows. At one point Dariel served as president of the Ross Valley Players.

The home Dariel designed on Montecito Road in San Rafael is quite secluded these days as a result of dense trees and shrubs. The "old barn" theater built by the Ross Valley Players, including Dariel who, at one point, served as the group's president.

By this time, the United States was once again involved in war, this time on the Korean Peninsula, which had been divided since 1948 into a northern, pro-Communist regime and a southern, democratic regime supported by the West. After national elections failed to provide the northern Korea regime with what they considered to be acceptable representation, and with the south Korean regime's refusal to hold new elections, the northern army attacked the south, supported by the Communist Chinese. The United Nations, and primarily the United States, quickly sent troops to the defense of South Korea, and fighting swung wildly from the near expulsion of American troops from the Pusan Peninsula in the southeast corner of Korea to United Nations control of nearly all of Korea, which resulted in Communist Chinese troops entering the fray. Within a year, the two sides settled into a fighting stalemate along the 38th Parallel, almost the same boundaries that existed before the start of hostilities. A peace treaty was signed in 1953, after just over two years of war.

Once again Dariel did his part by performing magic for the armed forces in community talent shows to benefit the Korean War wounded as well as for other military functions. Daughter Marcia remembers, "When Daddy performed in the forties and fifties, he worked wearing a Mexican outfit, sombrero, serape, and all – the same costume he had worn in the *Magic in the Air* show. He also used an exaggerated Mexican accent. He was never Dariel Fitzkee; he was this guy from "South of the Border." A popular song of that era by that name was his theme song. He did the linking rings, the cut-and-restored rope, card tricks and so on, never breaking character. The audiences loved it. This is the act he did for U.S.O. shows and for their local theater group.

Marcia's husband, Bill, has only one recollection of Dariel doing magic, when a couple of Bill's fraternity brothers were visiting the Fitzroy house. They tried to get Dariel to do some magic, but he was reluctant to do so. Perfectionist that he was, he did not feel practiced. But Dariel did not shy away from being admired, and, after a short while away by

This photo shows Dariel performing his Mexican Magician act for an Air Force group during the Korean Conflict.

himself running through the routine, he came back with a deck of cards and said, "Here, you guys, let's play poker. He dealt out three or four hands of poker and instructed the young men to pool their cards and pick out the best poker hand they could. They came up with an ace-high flush straight. "Dariel said, 'okay,'" remembers Bill, "'here is my hand, an ace high flush straight in spades.'" That was Bill's only experience observing Dariel handling cards, but he says that it was characteristic of Dariel that he wouldn't play poker with his friends. If he would lose, oh, he wasn't supposed to do that; if he won, he must have cheated. There was no way he would put himself in for that kind of ribbing. That poker demonstration was probably the one that Dariel had performed for servicemen during the Second World War and the Korean Conflict and that he published in J. G. Thompson's *My Best*. In later years, as his hands stiffened, Dariel gave up card magic altogether. His love of card magic was sleight-of-hand, and he was not willing to do it poorly.

Dariel became a grandfather in 1953, which he announced to Ross Player volunteers who were helping to construct the Old Barn Theater by arriving with a bottle of Old Granddad. Dariel revealed another side of himself in this new role. "My dad adored my son, Billy" says Marcia. "My father could play with children. He did magic tricks for kids, of course, pulling coins from their ears, but he could play with youngsters on their level. He had that quality and kids loved him. It was almost like he became a kid himself again, and was back in Annawan getting into trouble with his little brother Dick when they were small. When Billy was little, Daddy carved out wooden guns; and they marched up and down the hallway chanting, 'Two, four, three, six, the Mexican army fights with sticks!' There was my dad, in his late fifties and early sixties, marching around the house playing soldier. Later, when Billy was playing football for San Rafael High School, my dad went to every game he played, rain or shine. He would not necessarily sit with us, but anyone within shouting distance knew that Billy was his grandson and the best line backer San Rafael ever saw." His second grandchild, Ellen, was born in 1967. Dariel did not live to see her graduate from The University of California at Davis and become a licensed civil engineer. How proud he would have been.

Dariel continued to write book reviews for *Genii* until the mid-1950s. For the most part, they are matter of fact, and only occasionally does he stray from the review to share his personal opinions about magic. Even those tend to be more of the same. In July 1954, Dariel commented on a review he had recently read about the opening of a new magic show. He noted that the performer was very competent and one of the best idea men in magic. However, rather than using his own genuinely individual material, he used far too many conventional tricks. The result was that he failed to be entertaining. Once again, Dariel ran up the old comparisons with Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, and Durante. The reviewer, wrote Dariel, was most uncomplimentary and considered the show to be simply a number of puzzles and set about solving them in print, demolishing the show with "vigorous and hearty contempt." In a March 1955 column, which reviewed Volume 6 of the highly popular *Tarbell Course in Magic*, he wrote, "My own personal opinions as to magicians' presentations are known to be violent and diametrically opposed to the type of performance presented by the average magician," and that "in spite of the great benefit brought to magic through Dr. Tarbell's careful explanations of the methods of magic, I feel that the average presentation included with his explanations is doing magic a great deal of harm."

Then, in the August 1956 *Genii* we find: "I have a new title to mention: 'The Song is Ended,' by Dariel Fitzkee. It is a few lines simply saying that this is the last of my book reviews in *Genii*. This series started in March 1944, 149 pages of reviews ago, when Bill, Sr., asked me to undertake it. As the years have passed it has been both a pleasure and a chore. Now the demands of my professional practice – architectural acoustics, not magic – plus the heavy research program I have undertaken, coupled with the absolute necessity of trying to assimilate the great mass of data reported from both here and abroad, make it impossible for me to devote the time to the reviews.... In a way I hate to step aside because I have been with *Genii*, except for short intervals, almost from its start.

"I want it clearly understood, however, that I instigated the move to quit, and Bill, Jr., and Gerrie, have been most understanding of my situation, as both of them, and the immortal Bill, Sr., also, have been and were in the case of my peculiarities and shortcomings over the 12 odd years."

Why did he quit? It is true that he really was involved in a major research project in acoustical science, and Dariel did want to be sure his faithful readers knew it was international in scope. It was important that he leave them with the right image – just as he wanted everyone to know that he had not been asked to step down. We take him at face value that the amount of research that would be required over the next few years was the primary reason he quit. But we cannot help but speculate about a secondary reason.

Well up in years, Bay Area magician Dan Solo is one of the few magicians we have found who actually met Dariel Fitzkee; his experience helped shed light on this possible secondary reason. Dan has had an interesting life himself, which included assisting Arthur Bull with his "Spooks Frolicks" ghost show and later running his own ghost show. In recent years, he and his wife have lectured on cruise ships about con games and mentalism. In 1957, a year after Dariel quit *Genii*, Dan was working as a radio broadcaster out of the Leamington Hotel in Oakland, California. The hotel was having work done on its ballroom and hired Dariel Fitzroy to consult with them. Dan went next door to see what was going on and was delighted to learn that Dariel Fitzroy was Dariel Fitzkee. Dan described Dariel as a short man, fit, well groomed, and dressed in a dark suit, looking younger than his 59 years. He was pleasant to talk with and willing to explain what he was doing, but he was very businesslike – not warm at all. Dariel was perfectly willing to chat about his acoustical testing, part of which entailed exploding small test charges throughout the ballroom. But when Dan tried to move the conversation to magic "Fitzkee froze up. He wouldn't talk about magic at all," Dan told us. "He said that was behind him."

The magic was behind him. We believe that in his last few years as book reviewer for *Genii*, Dariel believed magic to be sliding ever more into mediocrity rather than improving. "My own personal opinions as to magicians' presentations are known to be violent and diametrically opposed to the type of performance presented by the average magician," he had written shortly before leaving *Genii.* His last articles in *The Sphinx* were stale, almost trite. He could not have been happy with them. But, then, he had written everything he had to say. Those who had once lauded his work now chided him, albeit with good humor. In 1955, England's Goodliffe and Dariel had exchanged friendly banter in their respective magazines, *Genii* and *ABRA.* Dariel suggested that Goodliffe had probably written himself out in his first 500 issues. Goodliffe replied, making fun of Dariel's obsession for detailed analysis, "Dariel Fitzkee...is the pedantic reviewer type whose opinion of a magic book is normally recorded like this: 'I counted 13,342 words divided into eighteen chapters containing thirty-one tricks, seventeen sleights or variations of sleights, sixty-one line drawings of which one was, I noticed, printed upside-down.' He notices things, you see, with a bright, hawk-like eye." It was written in good humor, but we think that perhaps the barb struck home.

Also, Dariel's negative comments about Buckley's book and Thurston's last years were out of character with his earlier writings. To be sure, he was always one for candor when asked, but more and more his own comments had taken an unnecessarily negative turn. His early admiration of both Buckley and Thurston would have prevented his writing against them in years past; he would simply not have written anything at all. Perhaps he may have recognized a growing cynicism in himself and, if so, he likely was not pleased with it. Perhaps, too, he felt that all the work and thought that had gone into *The Trilogy* were for naught. Magic would never change, and he was not about to let it make him a bitter old man, nor was he going to waste any more time on it. John Booth was right; Dariel was not making the best contribution to society that he could.

So Dariel Fitzkee turned his back on magic. He wrote nothing more for the magic press, neither in books nor in magazines. We do not find any mention of his attending conventions or lectures. His daughter tells us that he still enjoyed magic; but it was all very personal now, socializing only from time to time with Doug Kelley and Dick Madden, who would still visit Dariel on his trips from Hawaii, where he had moved. Marcia also tells us that up until the last couple of years before his death, Dariel would go to San Francisco to visit clients almost once a week. Her mother usually accompanied him and would shop while he saw clients. They would always meet at the Golden Gate Magic Shop where Dariel was visiting his old friend, Tom Dethlefsen. But that was it. What was once a passion was now nothing more than a casual interest.

Chapter 18

Fame on a New Stage and Final Curtain

While turning his back on the world of magic, Dariel Fitzkee turned his full attention and logical mind to the world of acoustical science. In 1895, Professor Wallace Sabine was asked by Harvard University to remedy acoustical difficulties in the lecture room of the Fogg Art Museum. The charge of acoustical engineering is to design structures with absorbing and reflecting surfaces that provide the purest sound possible, whether vocal or instrumental. Of critical importance is something called "reverberation time," which has to do with echoes and re-echoes. Sabine's pioneer studies in acoustics resulted in the Sabine Reverberation Equation, critical to acoustical design. "Mother, it's a hyperbola!" was his exclamation upon discovering the critical mathematical formula. While satisfactory, it was not perfect. A revision in 1930 by physicist Carl Eyring improved it somewhat. This was the task to which Dariel Fitzroy turned his attention. This was the research he mentioned in *Genii* in his "swan song" editorial. He did, indeed, gather data from home and abroad and in 1958 he delivered an address at the Acoustical Society of America on his research and a year later published a paper "devoted to the problem of a more accurate calculation of the reverberation time with non-uniformly distributed absorption." – Known as the Fitzroy Reverberation Formula.

Two of Dariel's major acoustical projects were the Scottish Rite Temple in San Francisco and the Masonic Temple and Auditorium on Nob Hill in San Francisco.

Fitzroy's formula became the standard working formula for the industry. In 1964, he presented another paper, which was also published, on the same topic, updated with further results of field experiences. This was a huge achievement in the world of acoustical engineering and placed him in the forefront of his field. As recently as the year 2000, his equation was acknowledged as still being a useful design tool.

Fitzroy Acoustics was much in demand in the Bay Area from its inception on, and Dariel's acoustical work can be found in numerous buildings still standing, such as the Greek Orthodox Church in Oakland, the University of California at Berkeley Fine Arts Building, The Robert Louis Stevenson School Fine Arts Building at Pebble Beach, the Masonic Temple and Auditorium on Nob Hill in San Francisco, the Scottish Rite Temple in San Francisco, and, perhaps his crowning jewel, the stunning St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco.

Dariel received a terrific shock on New Year's Day, 1958, when he and Marcia received a phone call from Dukie Kelley, Doug's wife. Doug had been a close friend and protégé in magic for many years, and Dariel and Marcia had stayed with them for several weeks in New York City in 1940, where Doug was a medical student in psychiatry at Columbia University. Doug Kelley's career led him into the Army, where he served as Chief

Dariel, left, and his brother Pike in front of the old American Studios building, a drug store in the 1950s. Today the building is a tavern.

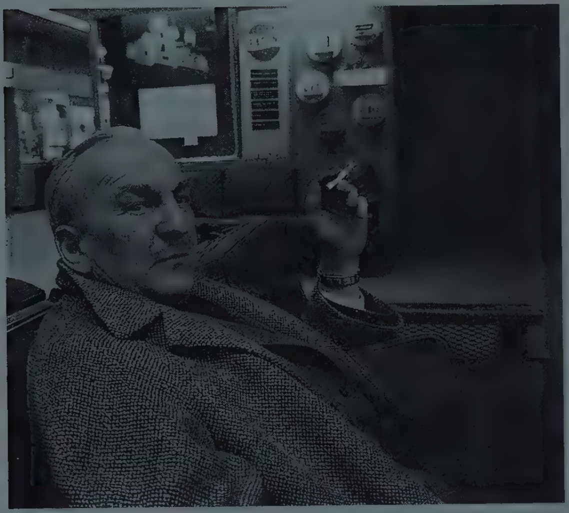
Consultant in Clinical Psychiatry at the Nuremberg trials in Germany after the war. He came to know the war criminals well, especially Hermann Goering, who committed suicide by taking potassium cyanide and thereby cheating execution.

Doug Kelley and his family eventually returned to the Bay Area where he became a popular, successful, and even famous professor of criminology and psychiatry at U. C. Berkeley. Many believe that he never got over his experiences at the Nuremberg Trials. In *22 Cells in Nuremberg,* a book he wrote on his experiences there, he expressed admiration for Goering "for taking his own life at his own convenience and in a manner of his own choosing. His suicide, shrouded in mystery... was a skillful, even brilliant finishing touch," Kelley wrote. "History may well show that Goering won out in the end." That 1958 New Year's morning Doug Kelley was cooking breakfast, burned himself and exploded in rage. Storming to the stairs, he paused, and with his family in the room, swallowed a vial of potassium cyanide. He died within 30 seconds.

Dukie's first call was to Dariel and Marcia, who immediately went to her side. Marcia was to stay with her for the next two weeks as the family tried to make sense of the tragedy, to no avail. One minute he was happy and cheerful; the next he was dead. Doug Kelley was possibly Dariel's closest friend in magic, and Dariel likely thought of him as almost a son. He was intensely proud of Doug's achievements in medical science and magic. It was a tremendous loss.

By the early sixties, Dariel had earned an international reputation in the field of acoustics, was a frequent presenter at conferences and was sought after for his expertise by architects, engineers, contractors, government agencies and even as an expert witness in legal matters. While much of his work was in noted architectural structures such as churches and college buildings, he was in constant demand to work with architects on school buildings, as well. This was a time of reform in many areas of society, not the least being the emergence of the "open schools" concept in education. This concept favored large open spaces separated by baffles rather than walls, supposedly encouraging a sense of freedom and creativity. (The term "open schools" took on additional meanings later.) Naturally, such architecture required careful acoustical planning so that spirited discussions in one area would not interfere with learning in other areas. The Ford Foundation secured the consulting services of Dariel and John Lyon Reid, a noted San Francisco school architect, as part of their nation-wide study on the open school concept. Dariel and John Reid toured schools throughout the country for the better part of a year, and their findings resulted in the book *Acoustical Environment of School Buildings,* by Dariel Fitzroy and John Lyon Reid, published in 1963 and still available through Internet sources.

Son-in-law Bill Dobbs joined his father-in-law's consulting firm in the mid-1960s after working as a planner for Marin County for sixteen years. While Dariel never really retired, he was in his late sixties and a few health problems were slowing him down a bit.



In the 1960s Dariel was involved in a nation-wide school study for The Ford Foundation. The lower photo shows Dariel and Marcia at an acoustical conference in 1961.

Bill joined the firm to help take some of the load off Dariel. Bill remembers his father-in-law as being opinionated and having a strong personality, perhaps, Bill speculated, a result of overcompensation for his short stature. He was clearly an intelligent, competent scientist and engineer; and, if he were around people who he felt did not match up to his standards, he showed little tolerance. He expected more of people than perhaps they did of themselves, and his opinion of his peers determined his interactions with them. That was a trait that Sid Fleischman recalled from his only encounter with Dariel in 1940. Bill remembers that, even though he was a partner in the firm, he was very conscious of entering conversations with care and especially avoided interrupting Dariel, whether he was making a point or telling a joke.

"He was very competitive," said Bill. "Often he was competitive with people who didn't know there was a competition. Dariel loved fast cars, and he always had to have a car with a lot of power – a Studebaker Hawk and in later years always a Thunderbird. He'd pull up to a stoplight next to a car, glance over at the driver, and say to me, 'I can take that son of a bitch.' The light would turn green and we'd go screaming across the intersection. He'd say, 'I sure beat him!' And the fellow didn't even know he had been in a race!

"My point is," continued Bill, "that Dariel was very competitive and was always aware of the fact that everyone is always, to some degree, in some type of competition. There might not be a name or a face, but nevertheless, Dariel figured that there was some sort of competition going on.

Bill then gave a great example: "When I joined Dariel at Fitzroy Acoustics he had another young engineer working for him. The other fellow quit – not out of anger or anything, he just figured out it was logical for me to one day become a full partner and eventually take over the firm. With no real future there, the fellow left and eventually became a very successful acoustical engineer. Dariel and I visited him one day, and he left us alone in his office. Dariel browsed this other fellow's library while he was gone. When the other man returned, Dariel looked over the library again and simply said, "I got you beat." The man must have wondered what in the world Dariel was talking about."

While these examples may be seen as the negative side of Dariel's sense of competition, the positive side was that it was what made Dariel Fitzkee excel at everything he attempted.

THE FITZKEE TRILOGY
and Other Books on Magic
Published by
SAINT RAPHAEL HOUSE
SAN RAFAEL, CALIF.

Dariel did publish a catalog of his magic books in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

There is a humorous footnote to Dariel's love affair with big, powerful cars. When he first started driving Ford Thunderbirds they were quick, small sports cars. In his last years the cars were quite large and, because of his short stature, Dariel had a bit of trouble seeing over the long hoods. This gave him particular trouble when parking the car. Daughter Marcia refers to it as "a bit chancy"! "Other tenants of the office complex which housed Fitzroy Acoustics learned to avoid the area where Daddy parked," she remembers. "He looked out over that long, lovely hood and sort of guessed at where the lines were.

In October 1968, Dariel was seventy. He was at the top of his game as an acoustical engineer, but his interest in magic was now limited to watching the occasional show on television. Lloyd Jones, whose Magic Limited had become one of the better magic book publishers in the country, contacted Dariel regarding *The Trilogy* and some of his other books. Dariel responded to Lloyd saying that, while he was not interested in selling the copyright, he would consider a one-time republishing arrangement. He mentioned that he had already been contacted by Louis Tannen, one of the most successful magic companies in the United States. Jones had also asked about Dariel's library. "If I could get $2000 for it, I would sell it," wrote Dariel. He sent Jones a 24-page list of his library.

Dariel decided to postpone any decision on the library, but agreed to sell one-time rights to reprint 1,000 copies of *Showmanship for Magicians,* 1,000 copies of *Magic by Misdirection*, and 1,500 copies of *The Trick Brain* for of payment of $1,000. At one time Dariel owned the cold type for the three books, the actual plates that were used in the printing process at that time, but the printing company where they were stored went out of business and disposed of the type without contacting Dariel. This meant that Jones had to have the books offset printed. Once a contract with Dariel was signed, Jones made arrangements with Walter Graham in Omaha, Nebraska, to photograph the original books page by page and print the copies as agreed. Lloyd Jones asked Dariel to write a new foreword for each book and suggested that perhaps an additional chapter updating the material or commenting on the reception of the books, but Dariel declined to do that either.

Almost a year later, in September, 1969, Dariel responded to a letter from Lloyd Jones asking about the library once again. Earlier, in response to Dariel's asking price of $2,000 for the library, Lloyd had countered with an offer of $1,500. Now, Dariel said, he was willing to sell the library for that amount. A month later, Lloyd had not yet responded when Dariel received a letter from Bill Larsen, Jr., editor of *Genii* and president of The Magic Castle, the private club for magicians in Hollywood that Bill and his brother, Milt, had founded in 1963. Bill wrote that they were actively working on a Magic Castle in San Francisco, which would probably open the next fall. "I have heard that your library is for sale and we would be interested in making an offer – possibly giving us a favorable price payable at $100 a month in exchange for naming it the Dariel Fitzkee Library." The library in Hollywood was named the William Larsen, Sr., Memorial Library. That would have been an intriguing offer to Dariel – in one sense a partnership with his old friend, the late Bill Sr., and in another sense, immortality.

To Dariel's credit, he wrote Bill Larsen, Jr., that he was in negotiations with Lloyd Jones, and ethically Lloyd had first claim. It appears that the agreement with Jones went on hold for a few weeks, perhaps at Jones's suggestion, while Dariel waited to hear from

Larsen. Old animosities between Lloyd and Dariel were long over, and the two were very courteous toward and respectful of one another. In fact, in 1955, Lloyd Jones had been elected National President of The Society of American Magicians, the second West Coaster to hold the office to which Dariel had aspired in 1934. The Magic Castle, San Francisco was not meant to be, however, and Dariel wrote Jones on December 1, 1969, that the Magic Castle offer was too indefinite. The library became the property of Lloyd Jones. In 1975 it was sold to Byron Walker, also of the Bay Area.

This is the jewell of Dariel's work as an acoustical consultant, the magnificent St. Mary's Cathedral on Nob Hill in San Francisco.

Probably Dariel's greatest design achievement as an acoustical engineer was as consultant for the San Francisco's St. Mary's Cathedral, built on Nob Hill in 1970. The headline for the lead article in *Form and Function* (architectural) magazine, 1971, reads: "Acoustic tile design muffles cathedral's echo as... Sound Control Reaches New Heights." Then the article reads, "The magnitude of the church stretches the imagination. The cupola walls, which rise to 190 ft. above the floor, are supported by four massive concrete pylons. Diamond-shaped coffers completely fill the inner surfaces of the reinforced concrete walls.... It's huge 2,135,000 cu. ft. hyperbolic paraboloid cupola had a potential reverberation problem," which Dariel Fitzroy determined would result in a reverberation period of about 12 seconds [which was the problem]. However, Dariel was able to provide suggestions to resolve the problems, and the Cathedral is truly a magnificent building with exceptional sound.

Dariel continued to publish articles on acoustical engineering, such as "The Sound System Design for St. Mary's Cathedral, San Francisco," a paper delivered at the Audio Engineering Society convention in September 1970 and still available as a download from that Society, and an article in *School Management* in 1970 for school administrators on what they should know about acoustics, among others. Throughout his life, Dariel maintained a desire to share the results of his search for knowledge with others.

In May, 1972, Dariel celebrated his 74th birthday, still busy with his firm. At the end of that year, on December 1st, in recognition of his lifetime achievements in acoustical science, Dariel Fitzroy was made a Fellow in the Acoustical Society of America. This was the highest honor an acoustical engineer could ever hope to receive and an award given to very few, and then only to those who advanced the profession significantly. No doubt his Fitzroy Reverberation Formula was a strong factor in this recognition, as well it should have been, and we suspect that Dariel felt a great sense of accomplishment in the award. It reflected achievement in everything Dariel believed in – research, analysis, deduction, hypothesis, theory and application. Like in magic, it was not enough to gather data and design formula. It was the product that counted, and it had to entertain the audience.

Perhaps most remarkable of all was that Dariel Fitzroy, Fellow of the Acoustical Association of America, had never attended a day of college in his life. Although he claimed the University of Chicago as his own, his attendance there had been as a member of The

Student Army Training Corps. Dariel Fitzkee was self taught, preeminent in every field he pursued, and a shining example of the dedication and perseverance of his generation.

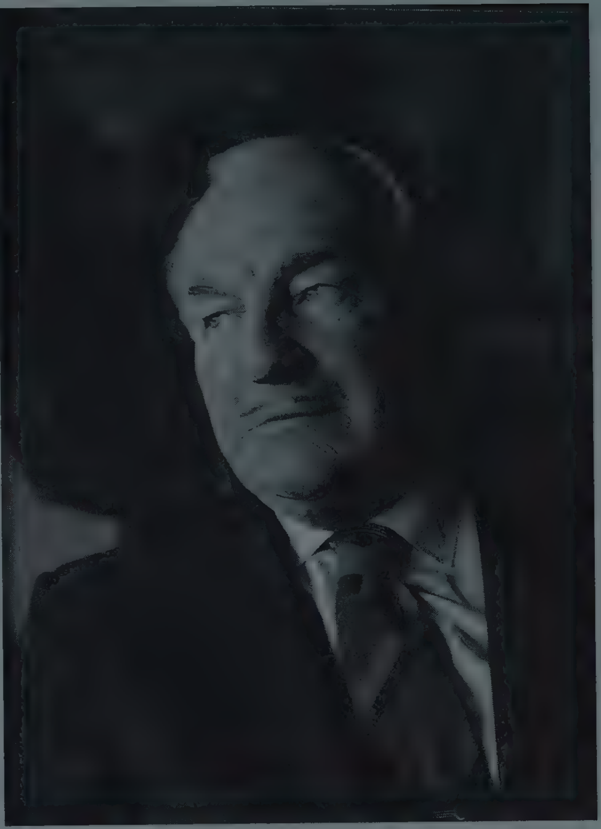
In 1973, Dariel and Marcia celebrated fifty years of marriage. Daughter Marcia and Bill planned a surprise anniversary party for the couple. "We couldn't have a big celebration," explains daughter Marcia, "because none of their friends knew Daddy's true age. When Daddy returned to San Rafael from New York City in 1941 and applied for a new driver's license, he took ten years off his age. That was my dad – image was everything!" Daughter Marcia and Bill invited Dariel and Marcia to their home for dinner. Family members, including Marcia's cousins and their families, dressed in the styles of the Roaring Twenties, arrived in advance and were hidden. With the lights out, they waited for the lights of the Thunderbird. Then, like some television sit-com they waited... and waited. Finally, the car pulled into the driveway. The guests gathered themselves for the surprise, and... waited some more. Daughter Marcia sent her son Billy out to the car to get his grandparents. He returned to report that they were listening to the final inning of a Giant's baseball game, then went back out to listen with them. That was the night Willie Mays hit four home runs. Dariel had his priorities straight! After the last out, Billy led his grandparents into the house and the long-delayed surprise party.

In his last years, his lifetime of smoking began to take a toll on Dariel, and an old back problem slowed him down. He wasn't in robust health after around 1970. He had a couple of operations and also a couple of mild heart attacks, nothing really major – just mild annoyances to a man who demanded perfection from everybody, particularly himself. When he went to the doctor, he always made sure that it was his friend's last appointment of the day. They would close the door and Dariel would open a bottle of Rebel Yell, Tennessee sour mash that a family friend always brought him from Memphis. He and his doctor would hoist a few during his examination. That, too, was Dariel.

Having been a workaholic all of his life, he remained active in the firm until the end, although Bill picked up more and more of the load. Dick Madden and his wife Marge visited whenever they came from Hawaii, but Dariel's traveling days were pretty much over. He had visited his brother Pike, and his wife, Lou, a few times when he was in Chicago, but he had lost his younger brother, Dick, who died suddenly in 1963 while Dariel and Marcia had been in Europe. Theirs had been a strong brotherly love and great friendship, filled with fun and laughter, and Dariel felt the loss terribly. The family decided not to tell Dariel until he and Marcia returned from Europe, and Dick's wife, Marge, came to California to be with daughter Marcia to help break the news to Dariel when he arrived.

Dariel was a devoted family man, something not readily evident in his life history of magic and science. Most evenings were spent with the family, and his writing was done on weekends and late evenings. Daughter Marcia never heard her mother complain of the time her father spent with his projects and writing. In fact, she never heard her mother or her father ever complain about the other's activities. Dariel absolutely adored his grandson, Billy, and spent much time with him. Marcia's close friendship with cousin Muriel had never waned, and Muriel had moved back to San Rafael after her husband's death, where she and Marcia spent much time together. "The Adairs," Marcia's family, were always together on holidays. Nothing was more important than family.

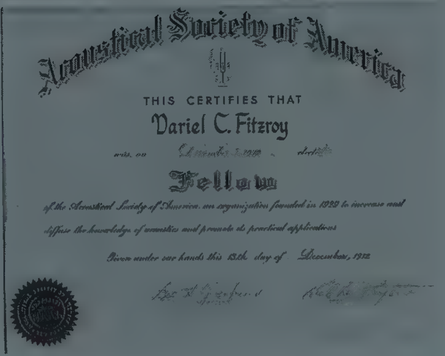
Show business was still in Dariel's blood, and he enjoyed watching Ed Sullivan and similar revue shows on television. He kept up with news, Edward R. Murrow, and the like, and one or two situation comedies. He always loved sports, which is not surprising considering his athletic abilities as a youth, although he was never involved in sports as an adult



Dariel was named a Fellow in the Acoustical Society of America at the age of 74. What is truly remarkable is that Dariel Fitzkee was completely self-taught. He never attended college a day in his life!

other than as a spectator. He followed the Giants and the Forty-Niners, and the California Bears football team, but didn't watch basketball. This was before the three-point shot rule was adopted and many short men had trouble warming to basketball because of the dominance of tall players. He also took up photography and "outfitted" a darkroom in a downstairs bathroom. He was an Ian Fleming fan and read all the James Bond novels, as well as other escapist literature. But he spent hours with German and French dictionaries by his chair, reading and translating foreign acoustical journals.

Sundays, if no ball games were on, Dariel would spend two or three hours listening to music, symphonies, and opera. He was a Puccini fan and also liked Verdi, as well as the strength (we like to think of it as the "showmanship") of Wagner's "Die Walküre," Ravel's "Bolero," and Shostakovich's "Symphony No. 5." As one might suspect, Dariel claimed his "hi-fi" was the best one he had ever heard. It was housed in a hall closet, and he would get in there with all the wires and spend hours fine-tuning everything. Then he would turn up the music until it rattled the windows.



Acoustical Society of America

THIS CERTIFIES THAT

Dariel C. Fitzroy

was, on [illegible] elected

Fellow

of the Acoustical Society of America, an organization founded in 1929 to increase and diffuse the knowledge of acoustics and promote its practical applications

Given under our hands this 13th day of December, 1972

Magic played only a small part in the last years of his life. He kept up his subscriptions to the magic magazines, but found little to enjoy in the magic on television. He did not like either Henning or Copperfield, even though one could show their success to be based on ideas similar to those in Dariel's trilogy of books. Dariel felt that in their shows, the magic lay in the illusions, in the boxes, and the audience would recognize that they were simply fancy trick boxes. For him, the magic needed to be in the magician, the personality of the magician. Interestingly, he would have appreciated the early magic of David Blaine because Blaine performed for his audiences; he gave them what they were looking for, even though a great many of Blaine's contemporaries did not enjoy his work or respect him as a magician. But Dariel would have turned off the television when Blaine started doing his stunts, like perching on flagpoles or staying underwater for long periods of time.

By 1977, Dariel's health was failing. He had lung cancer, although daughter Marcia does not believe her father or her mother knew it at the time. In fact, until daughter Marcia read the death certificate, she always assumed her father had died of heart failure. Cancer had never been mentioned and there was no talk of chemotherapy. He just got more frail. He would go to the office at 9:00 every morning but would stay only two or three hours. And to the last, he never lost his sense of style. Daughter Marcia's sister-in-law, who was raised in France, always referred to Dariel as "the Boulevardier," the man about town. He always had a dashing way about him and was always impeccably dressed. "Really," Marcia says, "in public my dad was always 'on stage'."

Dariel Fitzkee Fitzroy played the game; he fought the good fight; and he achieved prominence in every field in which he took a serious interest. On April 6, 1977, just a few weeks short of his 79th birthday, Dariel Fitzkee Fitzroy died as a result of lung cancer. The most knowledgeable man in magic, the most logical man in magic, the man with the "Trick Brain," was gone.

Dariel considered funerals barbaric, so there was no funeral in accord with his wishes. A very informal memorial get-together was held at the Fitzroy home. Lloyd Jones paid his respects, accompanied by one or two other magicians, but most there were close friends, family, and a few professional colleagues.

Dariel Fitzkee's ashes were strewn over the Pacific Ocean off the Marin Headlands near the Golden Gate, the entrance to the San Francisco Bay, as his wife's would be after her death in 1992. To us, this seems most fitting. The most majestic and beautiful of all bridges, The Golden Gate Bridge, will forever be his monument.

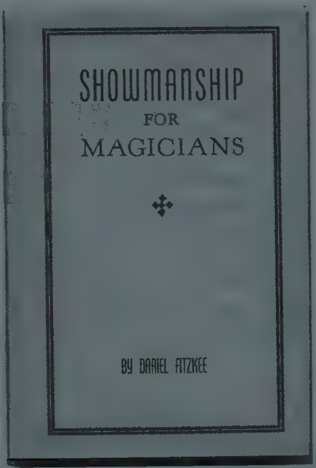
Dariel's monument – The Golden Gate Bridge

Chapter 19

The Fitzkee Trilogy

Dariel Fitzkee is famous today for *The Fitzkee Trilogy,* three books that have attained classic status in magical literature. Indeed, quite possibly they may be the most famous – but least read – of all the classics. Today, sixty years after they were written, and thirty years after Fitzkee's death, it is common to hear his name mentioned in any discussion of magic theory, but equally common to have his theories misunderstood. This chapter provides a synopsis of each book, along with selections from reviews found in the magic magazines of his day. I have quoted liberally from his works and the page numbers in superscript refer to the location of the quotation in the book in question.

After Dariel and Marcia returned to the Bay Area following their time in New York City and Dariel found work with the J. L. Stuart Company, his primary interest in magic lay in the theoretical question: "Why was magic held in such low esteem by the general public?"



He was convinced the answer was that most magicians were poor performers. Most were poor magicians, too. As a result, the general public was not really interested in magic; they were interested in music, comedy, dance, drama, and especially star personalities. Not since Howard Thurston had a magician ranked among the entertainment stars of the day. Thurston, Dariel determined, had been successful because he gave the public what they wanted. But times had changed, and most magicians were still trying to provide Thurston-era magic or, worse, Professor Hoffman's idea of "modern magic"! What the public wanted now was smart, exciting, up-to-date entertainment with the Noel Coward touch – which was what Richard Sheridan Ames had called Fitzkee's *International Magicians* show in his *Script* review – and the public had loved it!

That experience convinced Dariel that his theories of magic and showmanship were correct. He had written about his theories before, in his 1935 book, *Magic by Misdirection,* which had been well received, and in his columns in *Genii* magazine in the late 1930s. Bill Larsen had considered those columns worth more than the subscription cost of *Genii* and had encouraged Dariel to put them together in a book. Well... he would! But he was not interested in publishing a collection of those old columns. He had been through a fiery baptism of sorts, and many of his old ideas required the same kind of refinement. The book would allow him to do that... and would also allow him to validate his failed show.

The book, *Showmanship for Magicians,* turned out to be the first of his famous *Trilogy,* and it secured his position as one of the foremost, if controversial, magic thinkers of his era. The only way a magician could reach the top of the entertainment ladder, according to Dariel, was to consider himself an entertainer, first and foremost. That, in turn, required the magician to compare his magic, and, more importantly the way he presented his magic, to the techniques, skills and talents of the leading entertainers of the day. *Showmanship* provides the framework for doing just that. It is, in and of itself, "a definition of showmanship."

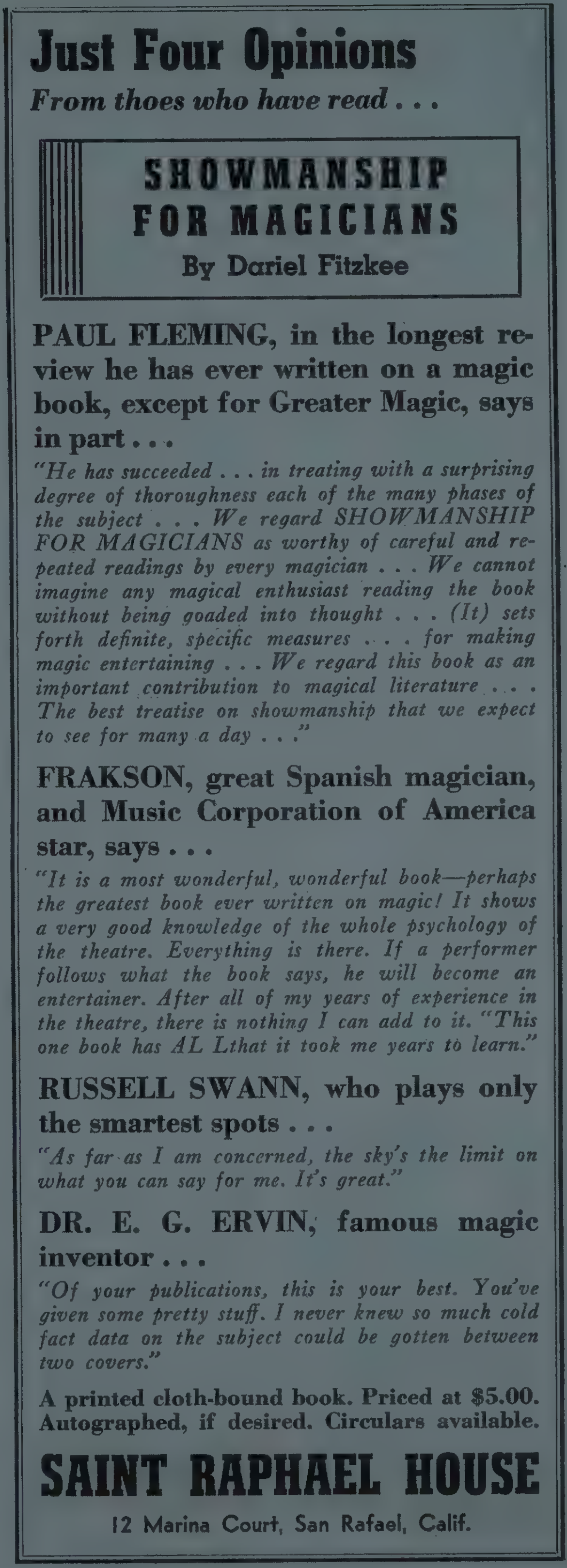
The first step was to analyze what it was that audiences liked about the performances of Broadway, night club, radio, and cinema stars – dancers, singers and comedians – "preferences," he called them. It is an interesting and significant point that Dariel claimed there was not one magician working in the 1940s who could be considered a star – not one who could compare to Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Al Jolson, Ed Wynn, Bette Davis, Shirley Temple, or Mickey Rooney. Blackstone? No. Dante? No, although Dariel did point out that one of Dante's most successful routines, "The Lazy Magician," was modern and clever and worthy of study by magicians – but not his whole show, and he was certainly not a star in the sense of the stars listed above. Chester Morris? Yes, he did magic, but he was famous as "Boston Blackie" in the movies. Fred Keating? Yes, he did magic, but he was a star because of his work on Broadway. John Calvert had a full evening show, but he was a star because he was "The Falcon" on the big screen. But Dariel did believe that a magician with the right personality could rigorously apply *Showmanship for Magicians* to his act or show and achieve stardom. Then magic would be something to catch the public eye, but not because of the magic, but rather because of the star. Thirty years later, both Doug Henning and David Copperfield would do just that.

Through his own analysis of star appeal, Dariel compiled a list of 39 elements and concepts that he felt were fundamental to star-quality showmanship. That is, every top star of stage, screen, and radio would use one or more, usually several, of these elements in developing his act. Jack Benny, for example, was a master at timing, the "slow take." But he also used music from time to time, for he began as a violinist, developing his character as a penny-pinching, somewhat vain but extremely likable person (every birthday was his 39th); and his radio program featured situation comedy that often focused on problems common to the listening audience, sometimes even including romance.

In the text of *Showmanship for Magicians,* Dariel considers every one of those 39 fundamentals as they were used by the stars of his day and as they might be used by the magician reading his book. The detail and the depth of his considerations are astounding. To illustrate his theories he drew on personal experiences from the *International Magicians* show; and almost every act in the show is used to emphasize one or more of the fundamental ingredients of successful entertainment, especially the acts that Dariel created using several or all of the principles. For example, a favorite teenage movie star of the time was Mickey Rooney. The public enjoyed his movies because of his buoyant, enthusiastic personality, the characters he played, and the situations presented in the plots of his movies, which often reminded the older members of the audience of their own youth. He had an innocent, romantic interest in every movie; and, when he co-starred with Judy Garland, there was certainly music. Sentiment, nostalgia, surprise, light conflict, emotion – all of these fundamental ingredients enhanced Mickey Rooney's personality and made him a star.

Obviously a movie set, or even a radio set, provided a much broader range of opportunity to develop Dariel's fundamental ingredients for success than did a club act. After all, a club act was generally limited to somewhere between 10 and 30 minutes. However, in *International Magicians,* Dariel showed that it could be done. For example, the opening scene was a humorous vignette set in the cocktail lounge of a magician's club. Consider again what took place. After a brief overture by the orchestra, the lovely soprano stepped through the curtain and sang an eight-line prologue. The curtain then opened to the scene of a modern cocktail lounge with a bartender behind the bar and the waiter to one side. The principles of the show then entered singly and in pairs, each introduced by the soprano. Drinks were produced magically by the bartender, with humorous repartee, and the waiter plucked cigarettes from the air for the ladies. Eventually the assembled group decided to stage a magic show for the audience. As the band struck up "Pennies From Heaven," most of the magicians stepped into the audience, producing half-dollars from the ears of the spectators as well as from the empty air, dropping them into champagne buckets. To conclude the scene, they were back on stage sweeping handfuls of coins from their pails.

This was an innovative magic act for several reasons. Compare it to the traditional "Miser's Dream" act with the magician in tuxedo on stage producing coins from the air to the music, perhaps "Pennies from Heaven," but more likely something classical. He might have brought a youngster on stage and plucked coins from his ears, hair, and elbows, and, as a finale, held the youngster's nose as several coins dribbled into the pail. This was a good, solid, act, not unlike ones that we still see today. But consider the dramatic/comedic elements of Dariel's routine: He presented a short, five-minute playlet. He used popular music including a vocal rendition, almost never done in



Just Four Opinions

From thoes who have read . . .

SHOWMANSHIP
FOR MAGICIANS
By Dariel Fitzkee

PAUL FLEMING, in the longest review he has ever written on a magic book, except for Greater Magic, says in part . . .

"He has succeeded . . . in treating with a surprising degree of thoroughness each of the many phases of the subject . . . We regard SHOWMANSHIP FOR MAGICIANS as worthy of careful and repeated readings by every magician . . . We cannot imagine any magical enthusiast reading the book without being goaded into thought . . . (It) sets forth definite, specific measures . . . for making magic entertaining . . . We regard this book as an important contribution to magical literature . . . The best treatise on showmanship that we expect to see for many a day . . ."

FRAKSON, great Spanish magician, and Music Corporation of America star, says . . .

"It is a most wonderful, wonderful book—perhaps the greatest book ever written on magic! It shows a very good knowledge of the whole psychology of the theatre. Everything is there. If a performer follows what the book says, he will become an entertainer. After all of my years of experience in the theatre, there is nothing I can add to it. "This one book has AL Lthat it took me years to learn."

RUSSELL SWANN, who plays only the smartest spots . . .

"As far as I am concerned, the sky's the limit on what you can say for me. It's great."

DR. E. G. ERVIN, famous magic inventor . . .

"Of your publications, this is your best. You've given some pretty stuff. I never knew so much cold fact data on the subject could be gotten between two covers."

A printed cloth-bound book. Priced at $5.00. Autographed, if desired. Circulars available.

SAINT RAPHAEL HOUSE

12 Marina Court, San Rafael, Calif.

Genii magazine ad

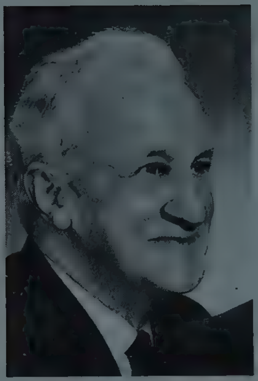
magic. Rhythm and movement were provided as the principles strolled on stage, some of them, obviously couples, on a romantic night out. The ladies were dressed in elegant, colorful, chic evening dresses and all were lovely, providing ample sex appeal. While they might have been in their thirties, they looked young on stage. The bartender provided comedy as did the magicians when they plucked coins from the ears of stately gentlemen and glamorous ladies alike and occasionally from a nose or two – and, they did this up close in the audience. Since it was a comic playlet, if you will, timing was important. Surprise for the act was not just the production of the money, but also the very movement of the magicians down into the audience. Punch was provided at the end of the act when everyone scooped up handfuls of half dollars and let them flow back into the buckets with a wonderful clatter. Spectacle? Yes. Several magicians performing magic at the same time was new and energetic. Careful routining? Of course, and the success depended upon tireless rehearsal, effortless skill, grace, and physical action. Was it up to date? Yes, the idea was brand new. So, in this one routine, Dariel Fitzkee managed to incorporate at least 25 of the 39 elements on his list.

Some elements of showmanship are obviously more dominant than others in any given presentation. The strong ones in this routine were surprise, music, movement, physical action, effortless skill, and spectacle. A similar analysis could be done for the seven acts in the show featuring all or most of the principles: the opening act just discussed; the guillotine, or "chopper" act; the water illusion act, which was added late in the development of the show; the Modiste Shop act that eventually opened the second half of the show; the paper-tearing act; murder in a telephone booth; and the finale, with three minutes of bewildering productions.

The Modiste Shop routine, which opened the second act of the *Magic in the Air* show, presented a provocative situation with the girl changing into a bathing suit. When the floorwalker knocked over the boxes hoping the reveal the young lady in a state of undress, surprise – she had vanished. His presentation of the Doll House illusion demonstrated how an illusion prop, a miniature house that by itself would arouse suspicion, could be turned into something the audience was more likely to accept – simply a model of the home the young man hoped to provide for his fiancé one day. Dariel recognized that, if a magician could stage the trick in a scenario with which the audience could identify, he would not only interest them, but actually make them a part of the act. This was revolutionary thinking in 1943.

As a final example, consider his use of the Disembodied Princess. Usually the performer places a female assistant into the illusion, slides two large blades into the apparatus, and then opens the center section between the two blades to show that the middle of the assistant is missing. There is the head; there are the feet; but the middle is gone. The doors are closed, and the magician restores the assistant. What did Dariel do? He tied the illusion to a comedy routine in which everything the magician tried to do failed, and the performer obviously blamed the stupid, silent, low-comedy male assistant. Finally, in desperation, the magician placed the assistant into the illusion, shoved the blades in place, opened the doors to show the assistant's middle missing... and then walked off stage. The curtain closed as one of the assistants yelled, "Hey, aren't you going to put him together again?" "What do you think I am?" asked the magician, just before stepping off stage. "A Magician?" The curtain dropped.[SFM, p58]

In *Showmanship for Magicians,* Dariel Fitzkee uses the acts in his *International Magicians* show, and its later version, *Magic in the Air,* to teach important lessons about show-



Paul Fleming

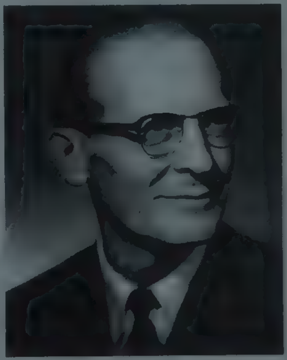
manship. He asks his readers to picture the routines in their minds, to try and determine why they played well, and try to create a list of the elements of showmanship that were brought into play. Finally, he suggests that they should compare what Fitzkee and his team had done to the traditional way the tricks were performed. Then, by reversing the process with their own acts, they could make their magic modern, and, more importantly, they could become the stars of their own acts. They should be the stars, not the magic!

The book was published in 1943 with a run of 1000, and a second edition of 1000 was printed the following year. It was the most popular magic book of its time and received good reviews. Perhaps the most impressive of these was by book publisher Paul Fleming, whose *Fleming Book Reviews* were considered at the time to be the most important analyses of magic in print. "We know of no book more likely than *Showmanship for Magicians* to contribute to... pleasing your audience," he wrote. He agreed fully with Fitzkee's concerns over poorly presented magic and the need to change the status quo, and that only "a minute percentage [of magicians] have given any thought to presentation or showmanship." While Fleming admits that some of Fitzkee's conclusions are too sweeping and that his judgment on some issues is weak, *Showmanship for Magicians* is still a book "worthy of careful and repeated readings by every magician who has the welfare of magic at heart."

To further validate his opinion, Fleming quoted England's greatest magician, the late David Devant, who wrote in the 1920s, "The great public of the future will want something more than magic.... The cry everywhere is for entertainment. Amuse us! Entertain us! Take us out of ourselves for a time! The magician who can do this finds that the public do not care greatly if the tricks are costly or cheap, beautiful or ugly, complicated or simple, as long as the performance is entertaining." He wrote that the major improvements in magic must be "in the manner in which the magician presents his mysteries to his audience."

Fleming further states, "The length of this review [four pages], may be taken as evidence that we regard this book as an important contribution to magical literature." Yes, the writing could be more precise; it could be less pedantic and obviously dogmatic; it could have used a good edit (with which we agree, by the way); but even so, Fleming felt it to be "the best treatise on showmanship that we expect to see for many a day."

The Linking Ring's Tom Bowyer wrote a similar, but considerably shorter, review, finding fault with the structure of the book and Mr. Fitzkee's "repetition and contradictions and even clumsy sentences." He does like the examples of routines taken from the *International Magicians* show, considering them "interesting and instructive." Bowyer concludes by writing: "There's a great deal of worthwhile information and advice in its 198 pages but we'd say that, if the author had prepared it with the care that he wishes his readers to exercise in plotting their acts, he would have done a much better job." Interestingly, this review was written after the Fleming review appeared in print, and we do note some similarities in emphasis. Tom Bowyer was noted for his candor and occasional lack of tact.



John Braun

John Braun, editor of *The Linking Ring*, found the book very appealing: "His logic is

crystal-clear, and he hits the nail on the head in every chapter. No true student of magic can afford to pass up this unique treatise." Another *Linking Ring* columnist, Willard Smith, wrote, "After 30 years in magic we have found enough challenges in this book to make us decide on many changes."

There are elements of the book that beg argument, but those very elements force the thoughtful reader to consider one's own approach to the presentation of magic. The value of a book does not depend on full agreement with its contents. Indeed, one may argue that such a book will not promote personal growth. The book was a catalyst for discussion and thought; and more than one successful performer, as we will see in the next chapter, found it inspirational.

Darwin Ortiz

Before concluding this discussion, it is worth noting that in his excellent book *Strong Magic, Creative Showmanship for the Close-Up Magician*, contemporary magician Darwin Ortiz writes that a fundamental premise to his book is that "the magician's primary job is to entertain his audience with magic. Not merely to entertain his audience while doing magic, but to entertain them with magic. The most important source of entertainment should be the magic itself."Strong Magic p18 And that is where he finds fault with *Showmanship for Magicians*. Fitzkee, he feels, promoted a form of "mindless entertainment that momentarily diverts but is forgotten almost the instant it's over.... This sort of magic," writes Ortiz, "results from what I call 'Fitzkee's Fallacy,' the belief that magic has no inherent entertainment value.... In his [Fitzkee's] view magic is some sort of bitter pill that you have to sugar-coat in order to get the audience to swallow."Strong Magic, p18

I disagree with Ortiz. Fitzkee did not say that the magic was unimportant or that mindless magic was acceptable. He did say, "I assume that you are technically capable of executing the various sleights and that you can perform your tricks without blundering," SFM, p179 and elsewhere, "A finished routine is possible only through tireless, unending, monotonous, incessant rehearsal. This grinding rehearsal is necessary to make every detail of the act habitual with you." SFM, p47 That is, you must be technically proficient. Indeed, as we will see in *Magic by Misdirection*, his goal in performance is that "the spectator [should see] things that appear impossible." That is hardly mindless.

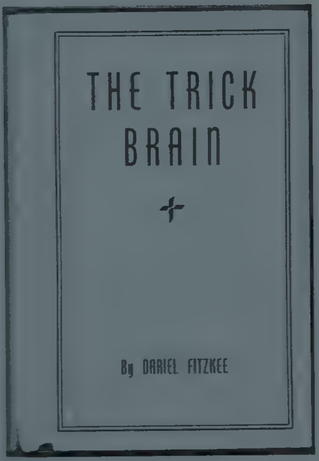
Throughout *Showmanship*, Dariel does get carried away with his opinions, to the point of appearing dogmatic. It is important to read through the overstatements and focus on the important messages in the text. His unfortunate comment, "You are not a magician. Forget that stuff. You're an entertainer," is an example of this. Just prior to that strange sentence, he writes, "Take the material you have, these tricks you do. Spend every minute on it until you can do it in your sleep." And then concludes, "Make them like you better than your magic."SFM, p47 This does not mean that the magic is unimportant.

I think that Dariel's position is this: if two magicians of equal skill present their tricks in such a way that, as Ortiz suggests, "there is no explanation to be sought; it is just magic," the one most successful, the one talked about in years to come, the one sought after for repeat performances will be the one whose strength of character, performance personality, and sense of drama, or comedy, outshines the other. But, that is just my opinion.

Finally, Dariel often wrote that he was himself searching and that in his writing he doubtless was in error on some things and had overlooked other things. He always felt that future writers would have more insight than he possessed and consequently produce better books.

Dariel Fitzkee was a master of building on the concepts of others. He had a large magic library that, in interviews for the *International Magicians* shows, he had claimed held 1,600 books – perhaps an exaggeration. But it was certainly good sized and likely included the English translation (by Professor Hoffman) of *The Secrets of Conjuring and Magic* by Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin, often considered the Father of Modern Magic. In the second chapter of that book (translated in 1878), Robert-Houdin divides the art of conjuring into six branches: feats of dexterity; experiments in natural magic; mental conjuring; pretended mesmerism; mediumistic phenomena; and others not belonging to any special branch. He also devoted a short chapter to what he called "general principles" – fourteen rules of presentation and misdirection.

Fitzkee had certainly read *Our Magic,* published in 1911 by David Devant and Nevil Maskelyne, two of England's most prominent magicians. The first two sections of that book were written by Maskelyne on the theory and practice of magic, which Maskelyne believed to be worthy of "High Art" if practiced properly. But it would have been the second part of Maskelyne's text that would have caught Fitzkee's eye. Maskelyne divides magic into three classes and thirteen sub-groups. Each subgroup is further divided into principles or methods. For example, manipulative magic can be divided into prearrangement, concealment, interposition and false handling, and false handling can be divided into forcing, securing and preparation, etc., and the text discusses these in length. Perhaps Dariel had used those very categories years before as he designed his own cross-reference system. Several years later, another Englishman, Samuel H. Sharpe, provided additional insights to the theory of magic in his *Neo-Magic,* published in the late 1930s. Sharpe felt that Maskelyne's discussion addressed the technique and craftsmanship of magic, while he, Sharpe, was more interested in the art of magic, imagination, and feelings.


THE TRICK
BRAIN

By DARIEL FITZKEE

The Trick Brain, the second book of *The Trilogy* is an intriguing combination of a scientific classification of magical effects, a comprehensive analysis of the many options available to the inventor of tricks and a gimmick, and the "trick brain system," or "trick inventor," for inventing tricks. Dariel defines the "trick brain system" as "a mechanical method of stimulating imagination in the invention of new trick plots and complications." Enthusiasts and supporters alike have focused on the system as the primary purpose of the book. This is not the case at all. The system is completely ancillary to Fitzkee's real purpose in writing the book. "The Trick Brain" refers to an approach to the study of magic, the analysis of research, the systematization and formulation of accumulated knowledge "with reference to the discovery of general truths or the operation of general laws.... All of the sciences have their basic handbooks," wrote Fitzkee, "and I am of the opinion that magic is more of a science than an art."[P19] Therefore, his book, *The Trick Brain,* was written to be the "handbook of magic." The "art" of magic relates not to the method or even the effect of a particular trick or routine, he explains; it relates to the performance. As in music, dance, and even the fine arts of painting and sculpture, the value of the work is determined almost entirely by the response of an audience. This analysis of Dariel Fitzkee's writings is that *Showman-*

ship for Magicians and *Magic by Misdirection* have far more to do with the "art" of magic than does *The Trick Brain*. In one sense, it is unfortunate that Dariel chose to give the name "the trick brain" to his method for inventing new tricks. The clever concept of this method and the intriguing title, "the trick brain," captures our imagination and draws us away from the real value of the book.

To go back to Dariel's explanation of this method, he wrote that it was "a mechanical method of stimulating imagination...." Dariel meant what he wrote. The use of charts and numbered playing cards to identify effects, methods and objects to be used in the invention of a new trick ultimately lead the magician only to the point where he must apply his own imagination and creativity to complete the process. The charts and numbered cards do not "invent" the trick. They provide only a framework which can serve as the stimulation necessary for the magician to invent the trick. At the same time we must not dismiss the mechanical method as irrelevant. That is not the case, as Dariel stresses in his introduction to the third book of *The Trilogy, Magic by Misdirection*. "The arbitrary selection method set forth in *The Trick Brain* is intended, as set forth in that work, to break up old idea associations. It directs the thought into various channels developed through the research made available to the reader. Perhaps, some of these avenues would never be explored but for the fact that the experimenter is forced in that direction by the arbitrary selection method."[MBM, p26] Furthermore, he explains, tricks invented through the mechanical method will necessarily be unique to the inventor/performer, and that, in and of itself, is an improvement over the usual mistake magicians make of trying to do tricks as they are written or as other magicians perform them.

Dariel Fitzkee was born to be a scientist. His hobby was the scientific analysis of magic. Sometime in the early 1930s, he developed his cross-reference system of classifying magic to which we have referred earlier. Over a period of ten years, he analyzed and catalogued virtually every trick and routine he ever performed, saw, or even read about. He explains that his analysis of magic ran to over 500,000 words. Furthermore, he was a master at building on the work of others, an important quality for a scientist. He had read Maskelyne and Devant's *Our Magic*, which included the first detailed analysis of magic, but objected to Maskelyne's use of the word "trick" to mean the method, rather than the effect. Objection or not, *Our Magic* is likely what set Dariel off in pursuit of his own classification system. The value of a book does not necessarily come from agreement with the author. It is equally valuable as a catalyst for intensive self-analysis. Indeed, Fitzkee's own books hold that same value for the reader who disagrees with him, as we emphasized earlier.

Similarly, as noted earlier, T. Page Wright's classification of card effects in the May 1924 *Sphinx* influenced Dariel in writing *The Card Expert Entertains*, called by more than one reviewer "The Trick Brain of Card Effects." Wright's classification, along with similar systems by Sam Sharpe and Winston Freer, all influenced Dariel as he analyzed the history of magic effects. For someone like Dariel, conclusions come only after exhaustive study, as evidenced by his 500,000 words. "The work of making the necessary research in order to evolve such an outline [his own list of basic effects and their attendant basic methods] is tremendous," he wrote. "Literally thousands of tricks, from explanations in magic books to the listings in numerous catalogs were carefully scrutinized and weighed." The result was a list of 19 basic effects, or classifications, into which fell, he was firmly convinced, "more than ninety-nine percent of all tricks."[TB, p25]

Winston Freer, himself a scientist and an inventor of magic, wrote a fascinating article about his own classification system in the January 1942 *The Linking Ring*, a system that would "smooth your path of thinking in inventing or building magic." The article encourages the magician to analyze magic tricks as to types of effects, their impacts on an audience, and their category (close-up, parlor, etc.). Freer presented his own list of fundamental effects, seventeen of them. "These 17 EFFECTS constitute a new idea, for they classify the feats of Magic without regard to their method of working, materials used, or magnitude of presentation," he wrote. This was not actually true because Sam Sharpe's and T. Page Wright's classification systems were similar.[See chapter 1, TB]

It is interesting to compare Fitzkee's list of 19 basic effects with those of Freer, Sharpe and Wright. Did Dariel copy them? Most likely not. Anyone developing a classification system would name similar categories. The differences are subtle and individual. By the time Freer's article appeared, Dariel had likely already established his list, although, as anyone would, he likely read over Freer's observations with an eye to better refining his own list and might even have rearranged the order.

On the next page you will find Fitzkee's 19 basic effects, and to them we have added the names of Freer, Sharpe, or Wright where those men named similar effects to their lists. This is fairly general, for there is some room for other interpretation of the lists. Below that listing we have added Freer's list of 17 fundamental effects. It is interesting to compare the Fitzkee list with that of Freer. Fitzkee's list of 19 basic effects appears to be the most comprehensive of all classification systems developed at that time. Furthermore, it holds well to this day.

Dariel Fitzkee devoted a chapter to each of the basic effects, outlining dozens of tricks to illustrate the effects and the basic methods used in those effects. For example, he describes 48 methods for accomplishing an appearance or a production. These are generic descriptions that fit the specific examples in his book but could apply to dozens, even hundreds, of other production effects. Among many examples in this chapter, he describes the sudden appearance of an alarm clock at the end of a ribbon. The method is a form of the "subject being taken from rotating, tipping, hanging or other movable container built into the place of production." Another effect described is the Television Card Frame, in which a selected card suddenly appears between two pieces of glass and uses a form of the method: "An object is catapulted or thrown into the place of appearance." While Fitzkee explains many classic effects by name, his discussion expands on those effects, suggesting to the reader myriad possibilities using similar methods.

For each of the basic effects, Dariel determined essential factors necessary for accomplishing the effect. For productions, the essential factor is a subject. The same is true for a vanish. On the other hand, the essential factors for a penetration are a subject, an obstacle, and the degree of penetration desired – partial or complete. While some of these essential factors are quite obvious, a fact happily emphasized by Dariel's detractors, it is helpful to remember that this was Fitzkee's scientific "handbook of magic," and must therefore be complete.

To summarize then, each of the basic effects is further described by listing the essential factors and the basic methods for accomplishing the generic effect. Charts in the last third of *The Trick Brain* list all of these.

By itself, the classification of magic into 19 basic effects was monumental and provided magic with a very useful resource. However, classification was only part of the Dariel's true concept of the trick brain. There is an essential difference between science and engineering. Dariel was both, in his professional life and as a magician. The scientist studies

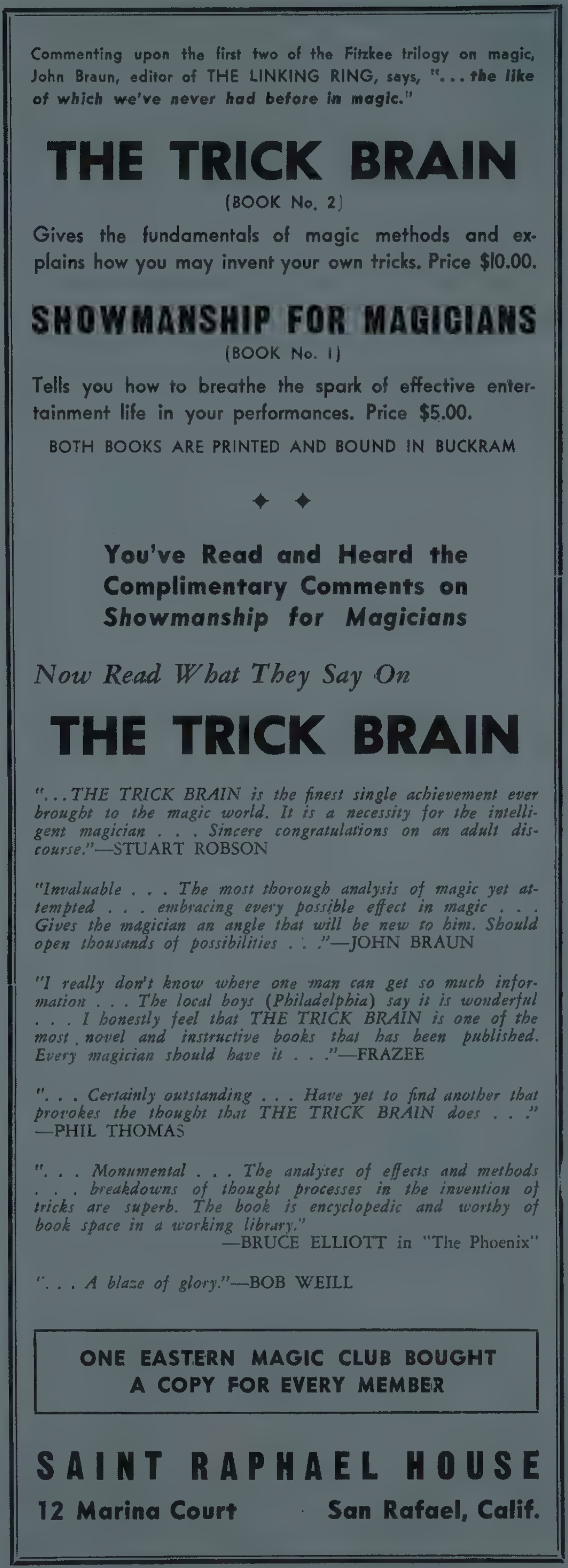
Fitzkee's List of 19 Basic Effects

Beside each of Fitzkee's 19 basic effects we have added the names of Freer, Sharpe, or Wright where those men named similar effects to their lists. This is fairly general, for there is some room for other interpretation of the lists.

1. Production (appearance, creation, multiplication) Freer, Sharpe, Wright
2. Vanish (disappearance, obliteration) Freer, Sharpe, Wright
3. Transposition (change in location) Freer, Sharpe, Wright
4. Transformation (change in appearance, character or identity) Freer, Sharpe, Wright
5. Penetration (one solid through another) Freer, Sharpe,
6. Restoration (making the destroyed whole) Freer, Sharpe
7. Animation (movement imparted to the inanimate) Sharpe
8. Anti-Gravity (levitation and change in weight) Sharpe
9. Attraction (mysterious adhesion) Freer
10. Sympathetic Reaction (sympathetic response) Freer
11. Invulnerability (injury proof) Sharpe, Wright
12. Physical Anomaly (contradictions, abnormalities, freaks) None
13. Spectator Failure (magician's challenge) None
14. Control (mind over inanimate) Freer, Sharpe
15. Identification (specific discovery) Freer, Sharpe
16. Thought Reading (mental perception, mind reading) Freer, Sharpe
17. Thought Transmission (thought projection and transference) Freer, Sharpe
18. Prediction (foretelling the future) Freer, Sharpe, Wright
19. Extra-Sensory Perception (unusual perception, other than mind) None

Freer's 17 fundamental effects listed below:

1. Production
2. Vanish
3. Change in position
4. Change in material
5. Change in form
6. Change in color
7. Change in size
8. Change in temperature
9. Change in weight
10. Magnetism
11. Levitation
12. Penetration
13. Restoration
14. Remote Control
15. Sympathy
16. Divination (comprising all feats of mental magic)
17. Prediction



Commenting upon the first two of the Fitzkee trilogy on magic, John Braun, editor of THE LINKING RING, says, "*. . . the like of which we've never had before in magic.*"

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"*. . . Certainly outstanding . . . Have yet to find another that provokes the thought that THE TRICK BRAIN does . . .*"
—PHIL THOMAS

"*. . . Monumental . . . The analyses of effects and methods . . . breakdowns of thought processes in the invention of tricks are superb. The book is encyclopedic and worthy of book space in a working library.*"
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what is, searching for new knowledge. The engineer uses this information to solve problems. In his acoustical work, Dariel did research using the Sabine Equation and, through his findings, developed the Fitzroy Reverberation Formula. He applied that formula, and other knowledge, of course, to acoustical problems to design improved systems. Equally as important as the classification system of fundamental effects was its application.

"Many tricks which are limited in their application to the accomplishment of one effect only may be converted to other types," Fitzkee wrote. "It is essentially a case of interpretation. After a thorough analysis of the original trick... the method used is reduced to the language of the basic methods as they appear [in his classification system]."[TB, p306] It is then possible to find new use for the prop or the method. An example of this described by Dariel was the shell bottle used in the "Passe Passe Bottles." Shells can be used for productions, disappearances, transpositions, transformations, penetrations, restorations and animations. The tubes and shells can be used in many ways, perhaps without the glasses, with oranges or lemons, perhaps, resulting in new tricks that look nothing like the original trick. The trick brain, then, is the application of knowledge contained in "the handbook of magic" to problems of conjuring to devise new and original tricks and routines. Once that is accomplished the magician can turn his or her attention to presentation, showmanship and the psychology of deception.

The final third of *The Trick Brain* contains the clever mechanical method for collecting an effect, its essential factors, a method for performing the effect, and appropriate objects for the purpose of inventing a trick. Did Dariel intend from the beginning for the method to be called "the trick brain" and subsequently named the book for the method? Or did he simply recognize that the method provided a wonderful marketing tool if he called it "the trick brain," after the title of the book? While the answer is uncertain, he did emphasize more than once that the clever method for inventing tricks was secondary to the true purpose of the book, the classification of magic.

In this back section of the book, Dariel presents charts of the 19 basic effects, listing the essential factors for each effect, and separate charts for each effect listing all possible methods for accomplishing the effect. Since the essential factors always require objects, Dariel also included three lists of 52 objects each, which would serve as initial lists for use and for example. He emphasized that the magician should develop additional lists. "The Trick Brain," then, required the following information: 19 basic effects, each with from two or three methods to as many as 48 (in one or two instances, no methods are listed, rather, the magician is referred to the chapter discussion; the basic effect "Physical Anomaly" is an example), and lists of objects.

Dariel's mechanical method of invention requires that items be selected at random. To do this, he suggested marking each card of a deck of 52 cards with a number from 1 to 52. After shuffling the cards with the numbers hidden, cards would be turned face up until a number between 1 and 19 was dealt. That would determine the effect; e.g., number 8, levitation. There are 13 basic methods for levitation or anti-gravity; so, with the cards shuffled again, they would be turned face up until a number between 1 and 13 was reached, such as 5, which signifies concealment through black art principles. The cards would be shuffled again and dealt until a number between 1 and 3 (or however many lists of objects the magician has) to determine the list to be used, then again to determine the number of the object; for example, 13 on list 3, "stones." The trick, then, is to cause a stone or stones to levitate or hang suspended using a black art principle. Now the magician must devise a way to do that. That is, only the bare bones of the trick are provided using "the trick brain" system. As Dariel wrote, "Your mind is the important factor which supplies the details still to be added to the basic plots and methods suggested by THE TRICK BRAIN."[TB, p294] It is a clever and unique system that does work – and is fun! But we still must not overlook the real purpose of the classification system, as Dariel wrote: "Never before has there been an attempt to marshal the elements of the mechanics of magic together.... No magician can be called truly 'advanced' in the science of magic unless he possesses an orderly and thorough knowledge of the basic elements with which he is working."[TB, p307]

The Trick Brain was an instant success. Dariel advertised it as "one of the most astonishing achievements in magic... this is an automatic trick inventor. In this brilliant special device, incorporated as a separate section, is THE TRICK BRAIN itself. It suggests new effects specifically. It tells you what you need, the things to use. IT EVEN TELLS YOU HOW TO DO THE TRICK. – Yes, the actual secret." Fitzkee was wise enough to recognize the great appeal of a "trick inventor," and that is how he advertised it. The initial run of 1000 sold well, although not as well as *Showmanship for Magicians*, which had two runs of 1000. Years later, in 1968, when Lloyd Jones purchased the rights from Dariel to reprint *The Trilogy* under his Magic Limited label, he ran 1000 each of *Showmanship for Magicians* and *Magic by Misdirection*, but 1500 of *The Trick Brain*. Over the years *The Trick Brain* has perhaps become the book most associated with Dariel Fitzkee, even though *Showmanship for Magicians* may have been the most influential.

The reviews of *The Trick Brain* were generally quite strong. John Braun, editor of

Bruce Elliott

The Linking Ring, said that it was "the most thorough analysis of magic yet attempted..., embracing every possible effect in magic.... Gives the magician an angle that will be new to him. Should open thousands of possibilities." T.J. Crawford, columnist for *The Linking Ring,* added that *The Trick Brain* is the most valuable creator of ideas for the magician in my possession...." And Stuart Robson, venerable magic dealer from New York, placed the book at an even higher level when he stated that "*The Trick Brain* is the finest single achievement ever brought to the magic world." In his column, Frazee wrote, "I really don't know where one can get so much information... the local boys (Philadelphia) say it is wonderful.... I honestly feel that THE TRICK BRAIN is one of the most novel and instructive books that has been published. Every magician should have it."

Bruce Elliott, editor of *The Phoenix,* a very popular four-page bi-weekly magic magazine, wrote in issue Number 73, "We are in a quandary about how to review Dariel Fitzkee's monumental new book, *The Trick Brain.* His analyses of effects and methods, his breakdowns of thought processes in the invention of tricks are superb. The book is encyclopedic and worthy of book space in any working magic library. But, and this is purely a personal, but, the core of the book is the "Trick Brain," which is a formula for the creation of new tricks." Elliott went on to suggest that neither he nor Walter Gibson, who had been co-editor of *The Phoenix* for some time, was one of magic's most prolific writers, and was the creator of the famous Shadow fiction character, ever had any luck writing fiction using a formula and doubted, by implication, that magic could be created that way either. Alas, although Dariel tried to explain in his book that the method was ancillary to *The Trick Brain,* most readers gravitated to the "trick inventor," which book reviewer Paul Fleming described as "almost childish." However, Fleming was one of the few to recognize and emphasize that the "trick inventor" was purely secondary to Fitzkee's real purpose, and his evaluation of the classification section was positive.

Tom Bowyer

Canadian Tom Bowers, whose caustic book reviews in *The Linking Ring* made him a critic magicians loved to read – and hate – was not overly impressed with *The Trick Brain* or "the trick inventor." Dariel "displays a knowledge of the subject that is indeed extensive – though not profound, as even we note several errors, inconsistencies and omissions, including the improper credits for some items...." The review in the January 1945 *Linking Ring* is a long one, much longer than usual for Bowyer; and, while he does credit Dariel with a generally excellent writing job, he concludes by stating, "And now we'll sit back and await – we are afraid not too hopefully – the flood of pure genius that should surely emanate from its readers if this Fitzkee brainchild is not abortive."

It is worth mentioning that Tom Bowyer annotated a copy of *The Trick Brain* in its margins and sent it to Dariel. Dariel made his own notes in response and sent the book back to Bowyer. Bowyer responded once again, and, in at least a few instances, Fitzkee had a final word. This annotated book came into the hands of P. Howard Lyons, who included selections from the exchanges in his excellent publication, *Ibidem,* a quarterly published from 1955 to 1979 under the quip "Trick Brain Tumors." The selections provide an interesting thumbnail sketch of both Fitzkee and Bowyer and suggest, at least the possibility of a grudging mutual respect. A sample will suffice: From *The Trick Brain,* "Whether tricks in

Peter Warlock

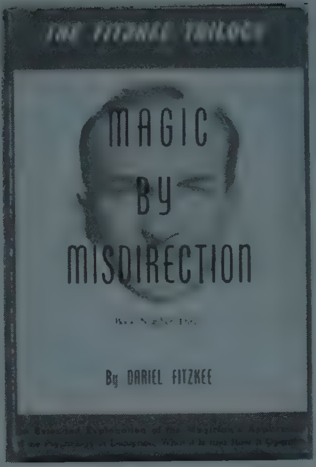
this category actually belong to mental control or to identification is debatable." Bowyer's notation: "It sure is!" Fitzkee's response: "Do you like to pluck wings off flies? And kick feeble old dogs?" Bowyer: "No, just deflate those who write too dogmatically."

The Trick Brain and the "trick inventor" caught the imagination of magicians everywhere (not just in Philadelphia!). For years to come, Dariel and *The Trick Brain* repeatedly popped up in the magic literature, for good and for ill. As French magician Victor Farelli wrote in volume 36 (1947) of *The Magic Wand*, "This volume has caused a great deal of controversy in magical circles throughout the English-speaking world. Some magicians describe the contents as rubbish, while others speak of the book in the highest terms." Farelli himself strongly advised the reader to study the book from cover to cover. In the first volume of *ABRA*, 1946, Captain Trevor Hall commented on Dariel's "over-enthusiastic followers in this country [England]." Even as late as 1981, England's Peter Warlock, writing "a discourse on the matter of Magical Invention" in volume 75 of *The Magic Circular*, wrote, "Fitzkee's *Trick Brain* is an outstanding work that not only analyzes all known magical effects, but as well deals with all known methods for bringing about such effects." Warlock went on to write that, while the chapter on inventing new tricks was practicable and could result in the invention of a worthwhile magical effect, he was certain that it was meant as an exercise to stimulate the imagination and that Fitzkee surely did not intend it to prove a substitute for true inventive ability. That this was indeed the case was made clear by Fitzkee in *Magic by Misdirection* when he wrote that "executing a sleight and operating a mechanical trick are but the essential elements required prior to embarking on deception... in and of themselves they cannot deceive."[MBM, p209]

Finally, in 2003, when American master magician Dan Garrett was interviewed in *The Circular* and asked what one book he would recommend to young magicians, Dan replied, "There are so many good books... but if you really forced me to choose, I would suggest one of my favorites, *The Trick Brain* by Dariel Fitzkee."

Bob Weill & Eddie Clever

Two men who were completely taken by Dariel and his *Trick Brain* were Bob Weill and Eddie Clever, the editors of *The Linking Ring's* "Hocus Pocus Parade," the magic section in every issue of the magazine. In the February 1945 issue, they wrote, "We consider *The Trick Brain* the most important work since *Our Magic*. *The Trick Brain* will not only take magic as a form of entertainment out of the past, but will carry it into the future. For it is the book of the future, it is a PROPHECY OF THINGS TO COME. And Dariel Fitzkee, whom we consider one of the most able writers on magic, is THE PROPHET! An extensive and exhaustive study... of *The Trick Brain* will result in new and modern magical creations." To those who argued that creativity cannot be formulated, they responded that Mr. Fitzkee stresses creativity: "After [the trick inventor] has picked your plot, laid out your apparatus, and has suggested the method, 'then think around the idea suggested.' It is this 'thinking around' that supplies that tiny creative urge. It is here that imagination, inspiration and



daydreaming enter, and it is very probable that you will come up with something entirely different from that suggested by 'the trick brain.'... *The Trick Brain* will stimulate thought. THE TRICK BRAIN IS THE PROPHECY and DARIEL FITZKEE THE PROPHET OF A NEW ERA IN MAGIC." Over the next several months, Weill and Clever collected a number of new magic effects from a number of magicians, and in the April 1946 *Linking Ring*, they presented "The Fitzkee Parade." Nineteen effects were included, all based on Fitzkee's theories; and six of them were singled out as "prize winners," the contributors receiving books from Dariel himself. That same issue ran a full-page ad from Dariel thanking Weill and Clever for compiling the parade and editor John Braun for allocating the space: "I appreciate their recognition, thus signally demonstrated, and, in all sincerity, hope that their confidence in me and my work is justified."

"This is the book I have waited many years to write." So reads the opening line of *Magic by Misdirection*, the third book of Dariel Fitzkee's Trilogy, published in 1945.

"The true skill of the magician is in the skill he exhibits in influencing the spectator's mind. This is not a thing of mechanics or digital dexterity. It is entirely a thing of psychological attack... of controlling the spectator's thinking... even in the face of the spectator's definite knowledge that the magician is absolutely unable to do what that spectator ultimately must admit he does."[MBM, p33]

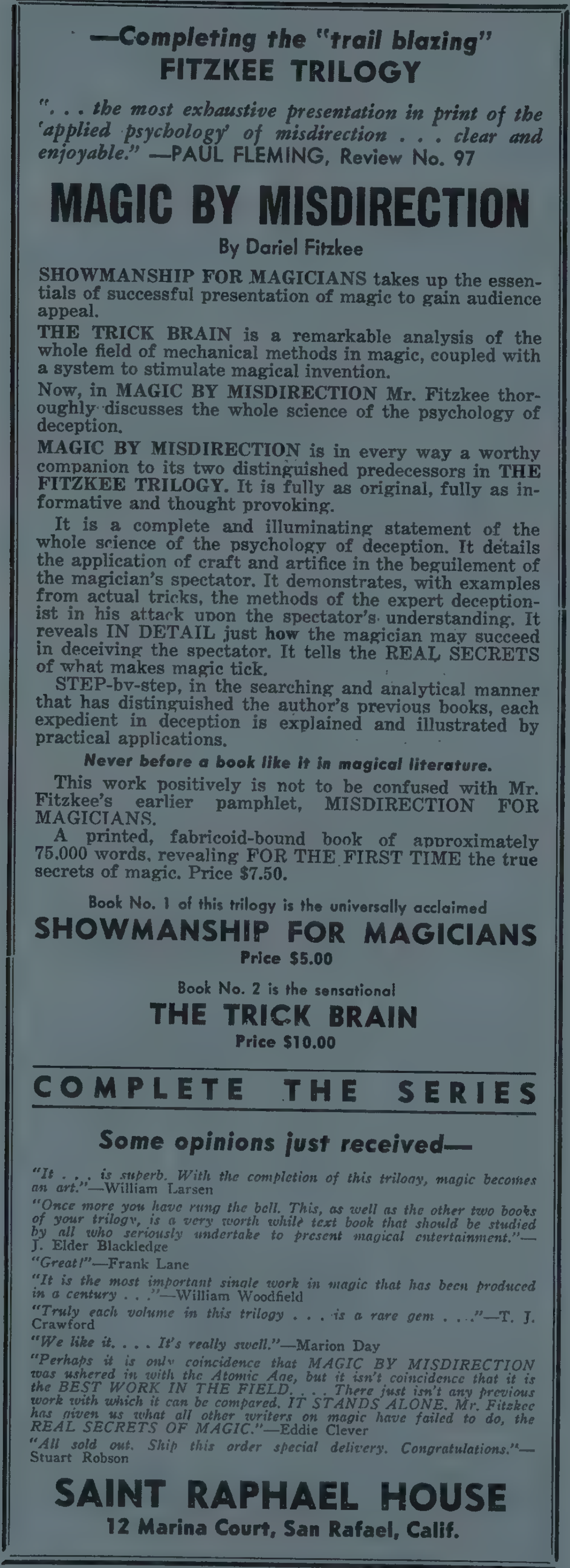
It is interesting that Dariel Fitzkee wrote his *Trilogy* in the order chosen. For many magicians, the assumption has always been that Dariel placed showmanship and entertainment ahead of the "magic" of magic, the device and artifice that draws so many to magic in the first place. Dariel states that all that is secondary to showmanship, and it is often difficult to get beyond his apparent lack of reverence for what so many feel to be the "art" of magic. But that is not the case. The fact is that it was his reverence of magic, love for magic, if you will, that led him to write *The Trilogy* in the first place. In his mind, magic, where the spectator sees things that appear to be impossible, is possible only when presented in an entertaining fashion. That was the magic of Robert-Houdin, whose magicians were actors playing the parts of magicians; that was the magic of Nevil Maskelyne, who created mental impressions in the minds of his audience of supernatural agencies at work.

A central theme of *Showmanship*, although not necessarily an obvious one, is that the performer must put himself in the position of the audience. What does the audience see when it watches the performer? First and foremost, the audience must be pleased with the performer, must enjoy the personality and character portrayed on stage. Without that, there will soon be no audience. The performer must be fully cognizant of what the audience is thinking – their perception of him as a performer. For the performer to be successful as a magician, he must understand what it is that the spectators see and understand, and – and this is of paramount importance – must orchestrate that. It cannot be left to chance. "What the spectator sees and what the average magician thinks this spectator sees might be considerably surprising, even revealing."[MBM, p78] In magic this is simply stated as, "If I were in the audience and saw this presentation, what would I think?" All too often the response is, "Hmmm. I wonder how he did that." Puzzle and solution.

In any successful magic performance are two viewpoints: the spectator's perception of what happens and the performer's knowledge of what happens. What the spectator sees should appear to be magic; from the performer's viewpoint, it is deception. The goal is to make that deception complete.

The text of *Magic by Misdirection* is dedicated to a thorough analysis of the ingredients of psychological deception, namely: pretense, disguise, interpretation, implication, misdirection, prearrangement, simulation, dissimulation, anticipation, "and all other resorts and stratagems calculated to lure the unsuspecting spectator along a path of ultimate victimization." Ultimate victimization meant, of course, bewilderment. Dariel knew this does not happen by chance. "The spectator's understanding of what he sees the magician do is influenced by many factors. These include the performer's interpretation of his own actions, the implications conveyed, the ideas induced, what the performer pretends, the confusion introduced, the suggestions of the magician, the degree of dissembling, what is anticipated by the performer, the false scents and red herrings, the feints invoked and all such artifices and stratagems." MBM, p70 That is, the design of the presentation, of "expert deception," is complex and intricate.

"Throughout the presentation of every trick there are hundreds of factors that shape the course of the spectator's thinking. These may range from the obvious and significant to the most intangible and trivial. All of these details, even the most minor, even the very order in which they occur, shape the spectator's ultimate concept. The expert deceptionist, knowing this, takes advantage of the fact. He deliberately colors all details, both major and minor, to accomplish



—*Completing the "trail blazing"*
FITZKEE TRILOGY

". . . the most exhaustive presentation in print of the 'applied psychology' of misdirection . . . clear and enjoyable." —PAUL FLEMING, Review No. 97

MAGIC BY MISDIRECTION

By Dariel Fitzkee

SHOWMANSHIP FOR MAGICIANS takes up the essentials of successful presentation of magic to gain audience appeal.

THE TRICK BRAIN is a remarkable analysis of the whole field of mechanical methods in magic, coupled with a system to stimulate magical invention.

Now, in **MAGIC BY MISDIRECTION** Mr. Fitzkee thoroughly discusses the whole science of the psychology of deception.

MAGIC BY MISDIRECTION is in every way a worthy companion to its two distinguished predecessors in **THE FITZKEE TRILOGY.** It is fully as original, fully as informative and thought provoking.

It is a complete and illuminating statement of the whole science of the psychology of deception. It details the application of craft and artifice in the beguilement of the magician's spectator. It demonstrates, with examples from actual tricks, the methods of the expert deceptionist in his attack upon the spectator's understanding. It reveals IN DETAIL just **how** the magician may succeed in deceiving the spectator. It tells the REAL SECRETS of what makes magic tick.

STEP-by-step, in the searching and analytical manner that has distinguished the author's previous books, each expedient in deception is explained and illustrated by practical applications.

Never before a book like it in magical literature.

This work positively is not to be confused with Mr. Fitzkee's earlier pamphlet, MISDIRECTION FOR MAGICIANS.

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Price $5.00

Book No. 2 is the sensational
THE TRICK BRAIN
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COMPLETE THE SERIES

Some opinions just received—

"It . . . is superb. With the completion of this trilogy, magic becomes an art."—William Larsen

"Once more you have rung the bell. This, as well as the other two books of your trilogy, is a very worth while text book that should be studied by all who seriously undertake to present magical entertainment."—J. Elder Blackledge

"Great!"—Frank Lane

"It is the most important single work in magic that has been produced in a century . . ."—William Woodfield

"Truly each volume in this trilogy . . . is a rare gem . . ."—T. J. Crawford

"We like it. . . . It's really swell."—Marion Day

"Perhaps it is only coincidence that MAGIC BY MISDIRECTION was ushered in with the Atomic Age, but it isn't coincidence that it is the BEST WORK IN THE FIELD. . . . There just isn't any previous work with which it can be compared. IT STANDS ALONE. Mr. Fitzkee has given us what all other writers on magic have failed to do, the REAL SECRETS OF MAGIC."—Eddie Clever

"All sold out. Ship this order special delivery. Congratulations."—Stuart Robson

SAINT RAPHAEL HOUSE
12 Marina Court, San Rafael, Calif.

Genii magazine ad

his purpose."

This is not an easy thing to do, because the average magician underestimates his audience. Dariel points out that the spectator is objective. He comes to the performance prejudiced against what he is to see. He knows that the performer is going to try to convince him that what he sees has no explanation, and any action on the part of the magician that even hints of trickery will convince the spectator that "that," whatever "that" might be, is how and when the trick was done. As Fitzkee puts it, "Good deception requires absolute lack of any ideas as to how the trick is accomplished."[MBM, p90] Darwin Ortiz, in his excellent book *Designing Miracles*, has described it this way: "Magic is the presence of an effect with no cause."[Designing Miracles p37] That is, "If it can't have been caused by anything else, it must be magic." Or, succinctly and in 21st Century terms, "No way!"[s p36] Fitzkee points out that, if real magic were happening, those observing it would experience emotions of amazement, wonderment, mystification, and awe. Because the modern audience will always recognize in magic a puzzle and a solution, the goal is simply to baffle the spectator. "No way!" is the right response.

Good magic, then, is good deception. "Deception," Fitzkee writes, "is an attack on the understanding. Therefore, deception is an attack on what we learn through the senses, influenced by reasoning."[MBM, p121] Fitzkee divides deception into two categories. In the first, a great portion of what the spectator perceives is disguised in some manner. He does not see what he thinks he is sees. Disguise is often physical or mechanical – the thin base of an illusion, a roller blind, a sand frame. But, more than that, "actions are disguised, reasons are disguised, results are disguised, objectives are disguised."[MBM, p121]

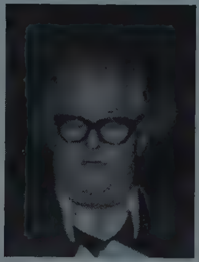
The second category of deception is control of the spectator's attention, commonly called "misdirection." Fitzkee explains: "We can... define misdirection as the act of guiding wrongly, the act of wrongly pointing out the way, or perhaps more properly, the act of deliberately misguiding from cause to an erroneous effect, to serve an ulterior purpose."[MBM, p164] This is psychological deception, and Fitzkee discusses many methods of exercising control over the spectator's attention, such as diversion, distraction, confusion, the use of monotony, anticipation, specific direction, and so on. "The psychology of deception is the first requirement," Fitzkee writes. "There is no skill in deception possible without knowledge of misdirection. Without such knowledge, no one – regardless of who he may be – should ever try a trick anywhere at any time.[MBM, p212]

Finally, and fundamentally, Fitzkee says, "I believe it can be said that good deception is entirely a matter of acting. Misdirection, it must be realized, is acting – good acting – and nothing else.... Through this acting the things a magician does seem natural, plausible, reasonable, convincing. They seem this way, even though the spectator knows them to be quite the opposite."[MBM, p220]

In his advertising materials, published in the September, 1945, *Genii*, Fitzkee wrote that *Magic by Misdirection* was "a complete and illuminating statement of the whole science of the psychology of deception. It details the application of craft and artifice in the beguilement of the magician's spectator.... It reveals IN DETAIL just how the magician may succeed in deceiving the spectator."

Once again it is enlightening to read what others said of his work. His protégé, Bill Woodfield, writing in *Genii*, called *Magic by Misdirection* "the most important single work on magic that has been produced in a century." Bill Larsen, in the same magazine, was strangely reserved, writing that the book "is packed full of good advice and sound conclusions. The subject of misdirection is thoroughly analyzed and the results will make for

John Mulholland



Bill Woodfield

greater magic." But that was all. Mulholland was much more enthusiastic in the November 1945 *Sphinx*: "It is a detailed study of the psychology of deception.... There are details brought up which seem so obvious as to be unnecessary and there are those most important details included which every magician should, and so few do, know. But it is the very fullness of the text which gives the book the great value it has. It is not a book of rules... but a serious study of a necessary part of the knowledge required by every successful magician.... recommended for every magician, beginning or famed...."

Like Mulholland, Frazee was wholly enthusiastic: "Read it from cover to cover," he wrote in the same issue of *The Sphinx*, "and I promise it will make you a better performer."

The Linking Ring editor, John Braun, said in the December 1945 issue that the book was "an exhaustive discussion of the artifices employed in conjuring for misdirecting the attention of an audience, and how those artifices are employed by famous magicians in performance of specific conjuring feats.... This work is the only one ever attempted on the applied psychology of magic." T. J. Crawford, the venerable columnist for the same magazine, wrote of the book: "The conclusion is compelled that its twenty-three chapters unquestionably reveal principles and demonstrate methods of application which any magician may use for any item he presents."

Of course, *The Linking Ring* "Parade" boys, Bob Weill and Eddie Clever, loved the book. "Dariel is progressive; he advances with the times," they wrote. Interestingly, Fitzkee dedicated *Magic by Misdirection* "to my friend Robert J. Weill, who is chiefly responsible for my having undertaken the entire series...." We have no idea how that came about.

Tom Bowyer, in his *The Linking Ring* review, bombed it! "Here we have Mr. Fitzkee, with an air of revealing the secrets of the universe, proffering a book – at one of his now customary fancy prices – that has the doleful distinction of imparting, so far as we can find, not even one new thought!" he wrote in the November 1945 *Linking Ring*. "The obvious (or what every magician knows) is further tediously reiterated on page after page, with the percentage of contradictions usual in this author's particular brand of cerebration."

That review stung Dariel and he felt compelled to strike back, which he did in full page ads in *Genii* and *The Linking Ring*, rebutting Bowyer's review without identifying Bowyer by name, although surely a high percentage of *Genii* readers also read *The Linking Ring*. He reprinted the review paragraph by paragraph, section by section, attempting to refute it with quotations from others as well as from the publishing house, Saint Raphael House, which was, of course, Fitzkee himself. He then ended by quoting from Tom Bowyer's positive review, written nine years earlier, of Dariel's 1935 book *Misdirection for Magicians*, the forerunner to Dariel's present work. We think it rather sad that Dariel allowed his passions to overrule reason. Bad reviews are a risk every writer takes when sending out advance copies. On the strength of the first two books of *The Trilogy*, it is doubtful that Tom Bowyer's negative review affected sales. It is also doubtful that Dariel's efforts to refute Bowyer convinced anyone of anything except that Dariel had a bruised ego. A year later, in an article accompanying The Fitzkee Parade in the April, 1946 *Linking Ring*, Dariel could not resist one last barb at Bowyer: "My old chum, Tom Bowyer, that old profound thinker, has to read [*The Trick Brain*] one night when he's all tired out... and then he reviews it."

Magic by Misdirection was not as successful as *Showmanship* or *The Trick Brain,* and it took some time for the press run of 1000 copies to sell out. It was the most cerebral of the three books and, like the others, suffered from want of tight editing. Also, three sizeable books on the theory of magic in three years from the same author is a lot of protein to digest. It is possible that the magic public was satiated.

Darwin Ortiz

Perhaps the value of *Magic by Misdirection* was under appreciated at the time, but it is enduring. It was republished with the other books of *The Trilogy* in 1968, 1975/6, and in 1988/9 and will likely be published again in the near future. Dariel knew that detractors thought him an egotist; yet there are numerous occasions in his writings where he admits that his opinions are born of his own experiences and analyses. He was the first to pose the theories of magic to the depths he did, and many of his observations are relevant today. It was especially enlightening to read Darwin Ortiz's recent best selling books, *Strong Magic, Creative Showmanship for the Close-Up Magician* (1994) and especially *Designing Miracles, Creating the Illusion of Impossibility* (2006) while reading *The Trilogy.* It is not surprising to find similar concepts in any two approaches to the theories of magic, as shown by Fitzkee's classification system, which resembled those of Sharpe, Wright, and Freer; and comparing *Magic by Misdirection* to *Designing Miracles* likewise provides a number of interesting similarities. For example, Fitzkee wrote, "Therefore, it is mandatory that the magician realizes at all times what the spectator sees – and understands." [MBM, p78] And Ortiz: "All that matters is what the audience perceives."[DM, p18] Ftizkee discourses on two viewpoints, that of the spectator's perception of what happened and what the performer knows to have happened. [MBM, p78] Ortiz refers to the "inner reality" and the "outer reality" when comparing the reality of method with what the audience perceives to happen. [DM, p41] Ortiz also quotes Al Schneider on this recognition. The importance of both Fitzkee's and Ortiz's discussion, however phrased, is the recognition that the magician must be aware of the audience's true perception. Fitzkee warns the magician of the importance of being able to confuse the spectator "in his attempt to follow a straight path to the ultimate solution of the deception." [MBM, p75] Ortiz, too, cautions the magicians of the dangers of the "straight and narrow path" in his section on the "false frame of reference" technique. [DM, p127] And, to summarize, Darwin Ortiz wrote: "That is what this book [*Designing Miracles*] is about: Understanding how the psychology of deception applies to the design of magic effects." [DM, p27] Which is what Fitzkee meant by "skillful psychological tactics," the application of which determines the success of a magical performance. "There you have the subject of this whole work," he wrote. [MBM, p42]

My point is not to attempt a comparative evaluation of the two books. Rather, it is to emphasize that over sixty years ago Dariel Fitzkee was giving logical and careful consideration to the psychology of deception largely without recourse to a literature on the subject. He was well ahead of his time and, in my opinion, a brilliant thinker. Darwin Ortiz's *Designing Miracles* is the twenty-first century's version of *Magic by Misdirection.* As one would expect, the writing is more professional and more thoughtful in both breadth and depth. I consider it an exceptional book, with original concepts and examples by Mr. Ortiz skillfully blended with information gleaned from the thoughtful analysis of writings by some the most brilliant minds in magic today, such as Juan Tamariz, John Carney, Bob Cassidy, and many more too numerous to mention but whom Mr. Ortiz references and credits. But no matter to what degree Darwin Ortiz agrees or disagrees with the concepts contained in *The Fitzkee Trilogy,* Fitzkee must be included among those brilliant minds on which Ortiz – and others – continue to build and develop the art and, yes, the science of magic today.

The Fitzkee Trilogy was a remarkable set of books for its time, and with their publication, Dariel Fitzkee gave us a scientific analysis of the requirements for successful magic presentations. He understood full well that the goal of the magician should be to present the impossible, miracles without any possible explanation. To do so, every detail of the trick or routine, or full show for that matter, should be designed with the psychology of deception in mind, disallowing the spectator any possibility of successfully reconstructing the effect. The spectator must always be led away not only from the method, but from even the possibility of any method. No puzzle – no solution. In *Magic by Misdirection,* Fitzkee offered a classification system for psychological deception, with many examples – tools the magician could use to design his own magical routines. This cannot be accomplished unless the magician has a thorough grounding in the mechanics and sleight-of-hand necessary for the trick or effect. One cannot compose a symphony if one cannot read and write music; one cannot paint a portrait without mastering the techniques and skills of the artist. *The Trick Brain* provided a handbook for effects and their methods and a mechanical system for inventing tricks, not just for the novelty of doing so, but rather to force the mind into creative activity. Fitzkee readily acknowledged that one cannot deceive the spectator without the mastery of method. That was necessary, but no more important than, and perhaps secondary to, psychological deception. Showmanship, the presentation of the effect, cannot be separated from psychological deception, for everything the magician does as an entertainer should be designed with psychological deception in mind. This holds true whether the magician adopts a dramatic or comedic persona.

In *Showmanship for Magicians,* Fitzkee placed the focus on performance, and it was not really until all three books were published that it was seen how the three themes fit together, "the big picture," as it were. Yes, the books bordered on the pedantic in places. They suffered from a need for tight editing. We never heard of Dariel asking anyone else to edit his work and suspect that he was his own editor. He often wrote statements that were inflammatory, such as suggesting that the classics were so because they fit the average style of the average magician or that ninety-nine percent of all magical performances were either poor or mediocre. At times, he did show a lack of restraint one might prefer in serious works such as his *Trilogy,* a fault that may have lessened his effectiveness for some. Yet he was a diamond in the rough, self-taught in virtually everything at which he excelled. Those rough edges were sometimes evident, but he was "the real deal," to use a common colloquialism. For all of that, he was a remarkable man with a remarkable brain – he was perhaps a true genius. Dariel Fitzkee was the man with the "Trick Brain."

Shortly before the publication of *Magic by Misdirection,* Bill Larsen persuaded Dariel Fitzkee to write an article published in the September 1945, issue of *Genii.* Titled "Why I Have Written My *Trilogy* on Magic," we quote selections from that article here:

I wrote these books in order more fully, and more completely, to understand the subject matter myself. A long time ago some sage remarked that no one understands anything fully until after he has attempted to teach it to someone else. Very definitely, that statement is true.

Why a trilogy...? Because it seemed to me that there were three major branches of magic that needed detailed investigation. The three individual titles in my trilogy are, in the order of their release, *Showmanship for Magicians, The Trick Brain* and *Magic by Misdirection.*

As a performer who has spent many years in the show business, particularly having been in several varied branches, it was evident to me that magic as a hobby and magic as a part of the entertainment field are two widely separated activities. The chief interests of magical hobbiests are in learning secrets, practicing sleights, collecting books, acquiring apparatus and the like.

This is entirely different from the objective of the performing magician. To the latter, the chief interest is the creation of spectator appeal, regardless of the deception.

These two cannot be reconciled. Most amateur magicians, and many professionals, do not have the first rudiments of the creation and maintaining of audience interest. By far the greatest percentage of people who attempt to perform magic in public think that the mere tricks themselves are sufficient, that the maintenance of deception is enough. Such an attitude, of course, is impossible.

Many of these people do not even bother to do their tricks well. Many of them bore their audiences stiff. Many, many of them are dated in performance, in dress, in material and in attack.

Showmanship, which is essential for any type of public performance, whether the performer is singing, dancing, juggling, doing acrobatics, acting – showmanship has never been presented in detail in magical literature. I felt that there was – and I feel there still is – a great need for it.

As soon as a magician steps out in front of an audience it is the primary consideration. It is more important than tricks, than deception, than sleights. It is more important than any of the normal interests of our rank and file of magicians, amateur or professional. So I undertook to fill this gap in magical literature.

The only way of reaching sound conclusions, to my knowledge, is to attack the subject scientifically. This consists in a systematized study of a problem. A study of those examples which have demonstrated conclusively that they appeal to the public effectively should supply the answer. Breaking down the successful entertainments, the very top notch attractions, should yield the basic appeals to the public. Information so obtained supplies the answer deductively. The conclusions, when the common ingredients are discovered, should establish incontestably sound answers. That is what I tried to do with the book on showmanship.

Because the mechanics of magic had never been systematized, thus making a logical approach to mechanical methods impossible, I undertook to explore this field. It, too, was untouched. *The Trick Brain* is the result. The trick invention feature, entirely secondary to the breakdown of mechanical methods, supplies a means of applying my research.

That this systematized investigation of mechanical methods has been successful – in addition to the comments and correspondence I have received – is evidenced, to me, by the fact that two nationally known literary societies have conferred upon me honorary membership "for an outstanding contribution to American literature" – honors which, while appreciated, I do not merit at all.

The last book of *The Trilogy* covers the third important unexplored field – the psychology of deception. This was the original objective. In my attempt to systematize it, as I had done with the other two basic fields, I discovered that my original subject was but a small portion of the field at which I was aiming. Those who are familiar with my *Misdirection for Magicians* will realize how much I myself learned in the writing of *Magic by Misdirection.* The new book has practically nothing in common with the first one. Indeed, *Magic by Misdirection* in its final form is an illuminating surprise to me.

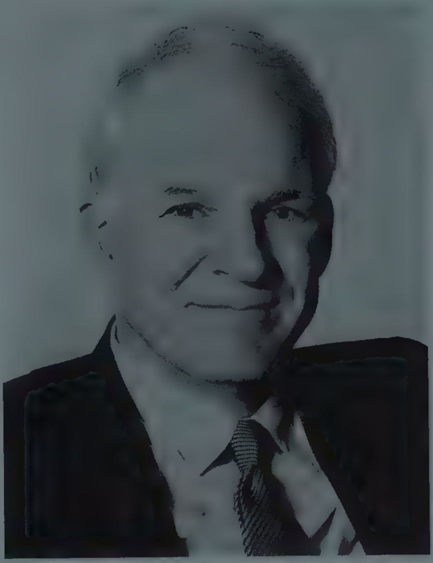
I wrote *The Trilogy* to systematize the three most important basic fields in magic. Primarily, I wrote it to increase my own knowledge.

Fitzkee released a first and second edition of *Showmanship for Magicians* and first editions of *The Trick Brain* and *Magic by Misdirection* in the 1940s. In the late 1960s Dariel Fitkee granted limited reprint rights to Lloyd Jones who released a third and fourth editions of *The Trick Brain* and *Showmanship for Magicians* and at least a second edition and possibly a third of *Magic by Misdirection* between 1969 and 1981. In all cases the copyrights were retained by Dariel Fitzroy, as noted in the books. The most recent printing of *The Fitzkee Trilogy* was in 1987–1988 by the late Lee Jacobs. Once again this appears to have been a limited reprint agreement, likely with Fitzkee's widow, Marcia, since the copyrights continue under the name Dariel Fitzroy – *Showmanship for Magicians* ©1945, *Magic by Misdirection* ©1975, and *The Trick Brain* ©1976.

(Editor's note: To our knowledge, Dariel Fitzkee never named the two literary societies that honored him.)

Chapter 20

The Importance of Dariel Fitzkee



Steve Martin

At the April 2007 Academy of Magical Arts and Sciences Awards in Hollywood, California, Steve Martin, an icon in show business, paid tribute to Dariel Fitzkee as being a powerful influence on his career. This was amplified in Martin's autobiography *Born Standing Up*, published about the same time. For four pages, Steve Martin shares with us the impact Dariel Fitzkee's *Showmanship for Magicians* had on him. Current magic was old-fashioned, according to Fitzkee, and there was room for something new. Although *Showmanship* was written in 1943, in it Fitzkee expressed what Martin calls an enduring truth. "My references were all in the past," writes Martin, "and in just one chapter, these roots were severed, or at least choked." Martin followed Fitzkee's advice and kept scrupulous records of his shows, summarizing each time how to make the next show better. What Fitzkee had to say about originality stuck with him; and, although he didn't understand it fully as a young magician working at The Main Street Magic Shop in Disneyland, it kicked around his head and a few years later emerged fully formed. "To implement the new concept called originality that I had been first introduced to in *Showmanship for Magicians*," he writes, "...I would have to write everything in [my] act myself. Any line or idea with even a vague feeling of familiarity or provenance had to be expunged. There could be nothing that made the audience feel they weren't seeing something utterly new." (Born Standing Up, pp. 50-54, 72.)

While it would be difficult to find a stronger endorsement than that one by Steve Martin, he is not alone in his praise. For over 60 years, members of each new generation of magicians have discovered in Fitzkee's books the same enduring truths that Steve Martin found in the 1960s. We cannot help but wonder how important Dariel Fitzkee was to the evolution of magic. The fact is that many of the same complaints Dariel had about magicians of the forties hold true today. While the face of magic has certainly changed, especially the look of illusions and the professional shows in the entertainment centers of the world, we think Dariel would still complain that 75% of all magic performed today is out of date.

We think that a more significant question might be: "How important was Dariel Fitzkee to the evolution of individual magicians?" Steve Martin, for example. Steve Martin was influenced by *Showmanship for Magicians*. Steve Martin, in turn, influenced hundreds of

Mike Caveney

performers, magicians and comedians, causing them to look within, to be creative, to purposely strive to be unique and to give the audience not just something new, but something to remember.

For Mike Caveney *Showmanship* came into his life at the perfect time. "When I was twenty, I thought I knew everything; come to find out, I didn't. This was the first time I had read a book where someone said you have to take a trick and make it yours; you have to make it fit your personality. It blew my mind open. This was fantastic! It was thrilling! This was the greatest magic book I had ever read. My magic life changed with the reading of that book." Stan Allen, who ran a magic shop in those early days of the 1970s, remembers that *Showmanship* sold well even then, 30 years after its publication. "I read *Showmanship* and hung on every word," says Stan. "I was always drawing up illusion shows and I saw the book as the story of a show, and that is what interested me. I wanted to read about that Mexican guy moving really slow until he jumped really fast into that substitution trunk," a feature of the show.

Jim Steinmeyer pointed out that the problem with *Showmanship* was that abstract examples cannot address what it is that makes something inspirationally good. "It's like reading a book about how to sing and then listening to a Frank Sinatra record. Reading how to do it is not the same as being great at it. Artistic ability defies scientific analysis. You can read what Aristotle wrote about poetry, but that doesn't enable you to write a great poem. "

Of course this is exactly the issue that critics addressed when the books were first published. Walter Gibson, Bruce Elliott and others emphasized that you cannot formulize creativity. But, the importance of Dariel Fitzkee on showmanship is not that he will make you great, it is that if you study his principles and apply them to your own talent you might become better. Studying Fitzkee is like learning the scales on the piano or learning how to mix colors on a palette. In almost all cases, you need that experience before your own creativity can reach its full potential. What is that old saying? Chance favors the prepared mind. That works for creativity, too. And that lesson is not dated.

Stefan Alexander

Jim went on to say, "At the same time, those books were brilliant because they were tuned to the time, and the fact that they were analytical is actually what makes them great. They probably have not been surpassed in that regard."

A case in point: In April, 2008, at the Vienna Magic Club Centenary Convention in Vienna, Austria, Stefan Alexander, of Rautenberg, Germany, held up a copy of *Showmanship for Magicians* and told those assembled how the book had changed his life. "Tommy Wonder brought Fitzkee and his books to my attention," he said, "and the timing was perfect. I was not yet sure whether to become a professional conjurer or not. *Showmanship* was my inspiration." Like for so many others, the Fitzkee's admonition struck home: "You have only one thing to do in front of an audience – and that is TO SELL YOURSELF. Fitzkee's thoughts about successful and popular entertainment, on getting and holding interest and attention, on how to put an act together, on how to rehearse it, and on how to sell it are still valuable pieces of advice for me. My shows became shorter; audience reactions became more enthusiastic; and my fees increased!" Stefan Alexander is quick to share his good fortune and from time to time presents a lecture for magicians based on the book. "I am continuing to progress," says Alexander, "with Fitzkee's books right beside my desk."

The importance of Dariel Fitzkee is that reading *Showmanship for Magicians*, even today, sixty years after its publication, can cause one to consider one's performance in ways one otherwise would not.

Stan Allen

What if the book had not been written? Both Stan Allen and Mike Caveney say that it was the first book they had read that emphasized the importance of putting your personality into the magic. They read the book in the 1970s. Henning Nelms book, *Magic and Showmanship*, was in print at that time, but it is really a book about specific magic tricks and how to present them. *Showmanship* is a book about "showmanship." It is the only book written between 1911, when *Our Magic* was published and the1990s that addressed the concept of showmanship in any depth. Stan Allen posed the question, "Who knows how many doors Fitzkee opened?"

Jim Steinmeyer

The Trick Brain is a different story. It was the first of *The Trilogy* books that Jim Steinmeyer read. He was not impressed with "the trick brain" system, but he found the middle section of the book quite ingenious. "He describes all these tricks and explains how those principles apply to magic – what an appearance is, and what the essential elements are, and so on. That is fascinating. The problem, and it is something that you cannot get in the trick brain, is that you can never be taught what makes a good trick and what makes a bad trick. You just get what makes a trick. But, what is great about the book is that it made people go through the steps of creating something even if they were never going to perform the trick."

As Dariel himself said, the effect suggested is only the beginning, not the end. It is meant to be a stimulus, to encourage you to recognize that a penetration is not limited to what magicians have done in the past. What is wrong with a block of ice penetrating a tambourine, or an egg penetrating a plastic bag rather than a handkerchief. Can it be done so that the egg is visible the whole time?

When *The Trick Brain* was first published it was easy to think of the trick brain system as falling short of what Dariel perhaps intended. "Thinking about it now," adds Steinmeyer, "it is quite remarkable how ahead of its time it was. It was really a formalized way of brainstorming for people who didn't usually do that – it kind of dragged you through the process before brainstorming was in the popular vocabulary. *The Creative Deck of Cards. The Whack on the Side of the Head.* Look at things in a different way. Take an object and use it in some way it's never been used before. Expand your creativity. There was Fitzkee in 1944 writing a self-help book right out of the 1980s and 1990s, making an attempt at something for which later we have a real vernacular. Now we can understand *The Trick Brain*.

"What is interesting about it, and I think probably good," Steinmeyer continues, is the process of making magicians who would never do that kind of thing do it. Fitzkee made you think it was a kind of card game. Step one, you do this; step two, you do this. It probably did a lot of good because it is the process of making you do it that is important."

Stan Allen points out that one of the real benefits of the book is that as people go through the process of thinking about new magic, of "inventing" a trick, they develop a new way of thinking. Their attitudes adjust and they begin to change the way they look at new magic. Indeed, that is the value of many books, both in and out of magic. They change the way we view the world.

So how do we describe the importance of *The Trick Brain*? It is interesting that it is mentioned more often by today's magicians than either of the other books of *The Trilogy*. It was extremely popular in the late 1940s and was a stimulus for group invention and discussion in numerous magic clubs around the world. It would still be useful in that context today, and perhaps a new printing will revive interest in "the trick brain" process. Beyond that, the first two-thirds of the book, and especially the descriptions and analyses of tricks under the chapters featuring the 19 basic effects, provides a primer for the mechanics of magic. To put it another way, "playing with" the trick brain system can, in fact, help us to expand our awareness of possibilities.

Jim noted that Billy McComb was one of those performers who could make a bad trick look good just because he was a natural performer. Yet, in Billy's *The First Book of William* is a trick that, according to Billy, he came up with after reading *The Trick Brain*. Is it a great trick? Possibly not, but Billy thought enough of it to include it in the book. And here is the point: Even a brilliant, natural-born performer like Billy McComb read the book to draw from it what he could. And Dariel Fitzkee did not write his books for the Billy McCombs of the world – he wrote them for the rest of us.

Magic by Misdirection was the least popular of Fitzkee's *Trilogy*. Stan Allen provided a humorous example of its value. He used the book to help a girlfriend write a term paper for a college psychology class. We are not sure what Dariel would make of that, but it was, we suggest, a practical application of the book.

Our opinion is that *Misdirection* could have been the most important of the three books, as Dariel intended. But Dariel, hindered by his need to over-analyze everything, made the psychology of deception too tedious. We have not found anyone in our admittedly short research who claims the book as an inspiration. We believe that it is filled with good information, however, and that magicians who carefully apply Fitzkee's principles of misdirection along with his principles of presentation can routine tricks that will appear to be real magic – magic without any explanation.

"All three books are analytical," observed Jim Steinmeyer, "and what is interesting is the way Fitzkee teased the three subjects apart. So you have one book saying here is how to write a song, and another one saying here's how to sing a song, and one saying here's what makes a song great." Fitzkee treated them as separate topics and wrote three books, yet they must be intertwined, which is what Fitzkee intended.

"There is a punch line to my story," Mike Caveney told us. "Back in the seventies I had a good friend by the name of Jim Connelly who had been around L. A. forever. He was an old pro and a great guy. One time I was talking with him about *Showmanship for Magicians* and told him that it was the book that sent me down the right road. 'You know, he always referred to his big show,' I said. 'That must have been something.' Jim told me that he had seen that show. 'Really,' I said. 'How was it?' Jim said that Dariel Fitzkee was terrible, and it crushed me to think that my guiding light was not a good magician. But Jim told me that *Showmanship* was a great book and that I should abide by it. It was just a case of 'do as I say, not as I do.'"

The fact is that while Dariel was a competent magician, he was not a great magician, by his own admission. Time and again in his writings he warned the reader not to use himself as an ideal. He was not good enough and the reader should strive to do much better than he did. His analogy was that Leopold Auer taught Heifetz, Elman, Seidel and a number of other great musicians HOW to play the fiddle, but no one ever heard of Auer playing the fiddle himself. Clearly Dariel Fitzkee saw himself in the 1940s as a teacher.

Dariel Fitzkee provided the world of magic with a set of tools and a reference handbook of magic – information, not tricks. That was his gift. The importance of Dariel Fitzkee lies in his ability to teach, not in his ability to perform. For those willing to study his texts, and textbooks they were, magic was possible.

In another lecture at the Vienna Magic Club Centenary Convention, mentioned earlier, London's card expert Michael Vincent listed the books which were most influential on his development. Second after *Royal Road to Card Magic*, by Hugard and Braue, he specified Fitzkee's *The Card Expert Entertains*. This discussion is also a part of his DVD *The Tapestry of Deception, Part 5, The Poetry of Conjuring*. "You will experience a paradigm shift as to what is important in entertaining with cards," he says about reading Fitzkee's book. "I wish I had read this book before I got too heavy into [too many sleights]." In the early part of the discussion, Vincent encourages specific fundamentals of technical mastery and points out that it is not necessary to know myriad ways to accomplish a force, for example. As he points out, this is exactly Fitzkee's position in *The Card Expert Entertains*. We found it very interesting that *The Trilogy* is not the only way that Dariel Fitzkee continues to influence magicians.

Michael Vincent

Dariel Fitzkee's works are not without their flaws. However, the discerning performer who is willing to read *The Trilogy* with a critical eye, to sift the wheat from the chaff, may well find the inspiration that others have found. Steve Martin, Mike Caveney, Tommy Wonder, Jim Steinmeyer, Billy McComb, Stefan Alexander, Stan Allen, Michael Vincent – and that barely scratches the surface. Cast aside what does not fit, what does not make sense – but do not overlook the enduring truths! There is a reason these books are classics.

Author's note: I am especially appreciative of Stan Allen, Mike Caveney and Jim Steinmeyer who spent time with me in Louisville, Kentucky, brainstorming the question behind the title of this chapter. Much of the substance of this chapter is a result of their collective insight and experience. Stan Allen, founder, editor, publisher of *MAGIC*

Magazine, one of the premier magic magazines of all time, is also a seasoned emcee and performer. He was one of the famed Long Beach Mystics, perhaps the most creative group of young magicians ever. Mike Caveney was also a Long Beach Mystic. It has been said that "a performance by Mike Caveney is unique. Each of his original routines is perfectly suited to his dry, comedic wit." In addition to being an exceptional creative performer in his own right he is the author and publisher of dozens of the finest magic biographies ever written. Jim Steinmeyer has been called "the best living originator of stage illusions," whose work defines contemporary magic. In additional to serving as a creative consultant from Broadway to theme parks, Jim has written extensively on magic and illusions as well as the history of magic and has recently authored several successful books on magic and related themes written for the general public. It was a privilege to share Dariel Fitzkee with these men.

Chapter 21

Personal Reflection and Acknowledgements

In 1997 and 1998, I had the opportunity to write my father's life history. As I shut down my computer for the final time on that project, I realized that until then I had never really known him. Dariel's daughter, Marcia Dobbs, tells me that I know more about her father than she does. That is not true, of course, since she has myriad memories that slide back into consciousness every time she reads her father's old letters, looks at the yellowing photographs, and responds to the trivia I send her from time to time. But it is true that a biographer often unearths little known or unknown facts and experiences about the subject.

Dariel Fitzkee was born in 1898; my father was born in 1906, just two years before Dariel's brother Dick was born. Dariel and my father were both born in rural farming communities. Both of their fathers were carpenters. Dariel's father built the town hall in Annawan, Illinois. My father built the city office in Weston, Idaho (albeit a much less ambitious project). My father and Dariel were both short men who walked tall. Both played the violin and both were leaders of bands. My father, two brothers, and a few friends entertained Weston as "Harlan Goodsell and the Howling Coyotes!" Dariel directed "The Marine Band." Both had strong, intellectual drives, and both were driven to succeed at whatever endeavors they undertook. Both loved their families. Both worked hard all their lives. Both suffered career-ending experiences and financial disaster at about age 40. Both came back from those set-backs to achieve even greater success. Both were self-made men, committed to doing nothing less than one's best, and were great examples of the best of their generation, of the Age of Optimism and the Age of Confidence. There are many differences, of course; but, as I wrote the life history of Dariel Fitzkee, I felt I understood him better because of my father. I am grateful for that.

It is now my turn to consider "the importance of Dariel Fitzkee." While I am quite immersed in the world of magic, I do not consider myself a performer, so his importance to me is very different from what we found in the previous chapter. Another way to ask about his importance is to ask why I wrote this book. I believe that the life history of Dariel Fitzkee is a satisfaction to older generations and an inspiration to the young. Those of us over 50 hear his story and identify with him. We knew people he knew or people who knew people he knew. Our lives were shaped by the historical events that shaped the world he lived in. I was born the last year of the Depression. I can recall some memories of World War II and much about the Korean Conflict. I knew Bill Larsen Jr. and Lloyd Jones; I saw Maldo and Frackson perform; I sat across a lunch table from Dorny Dornfield and heard his stories of Old Chicago. I relive parts of my life and those of my parents when I hear Dariel's life story.

Even at my advanced age, I am inspired by his life. He always admired and appreciated his wife, Marcia. He loved his daughter, son-in-law, and grandchildren. He kept intellectually active and desired to contribute something to the world in which he lived. He never, ever lost his zest for living. I am impressed by his intellect, by his logical, analytical approach to life, by his determination and his perseverance. His accomplishments are remarkable, especially when we consider that his education was largely self-taught.

He was a man of faults. He was often tactless; he had little patience for the duffer in magic. By contrast, I have considerable affection for the average magic club member who has such a great love for magic. He believed in a scientific approach to everything in life and, therefore, sometimes failed to appreciate the benefits of the liberal arts. It was hard for Dariel to admit error and difficult for him to ask for help. His writing is often pedantic and redundant and at times shows a lack of sophistication and polish. These detractions could easily have been lessened or even eliminated if he had asked a qualified editor to correct his work, but that would have been to admit deficiency. He felt impelled to publicly strike back when his work was criticized, which at times made him appear petulant. He was prone to exaggeration, especially about his own accomplishments. But some of these very flaws are the marks of a self-made man who lived through the Great Depression and, quite literally, had to fight for every success. And, it must be said, Dariel Fitzkee lived up to every exaggeration! If he said it was so, he made it so. His flaws are easy for me to forgive.

I hope that the younger generation will find his life an inspiration. He lived the cliché: make the most of every situation. He did that.

In high school, he was a track and football star, senior class president, on the debate team, and in the school plays.

He directed a band and played the violin on the Chautauqua Circuit.

He had the good sense to propose to Marcia Adair Wilson and the good fortune to have her accept.

He designed a unique form of stage backdrop that caught the attention of theatrical producers.

He built a successful theatrical supply business that failed only because of the Great Depression.

He designed and built a unique, exciting theater curtain for the largest opera stage in the United States.

He became a force in magic at the local, regional, and national levels.

He wrote or edited 15 books on magic and one book on acoustical science, as well as dozens of columns and articles on both magic and science.

He was a columnist for *Genii* magazine – twice.

He produced a stellar PCAM public show that sold out the 3,500-seat San Francisco Opera House.

He designed and produced *International Magicians in Action*, the best magic show of its era, and took it on the road.

He wrote the classic *Fitzkee Trilogy.*

He became the world's first independent acoustics consultant.

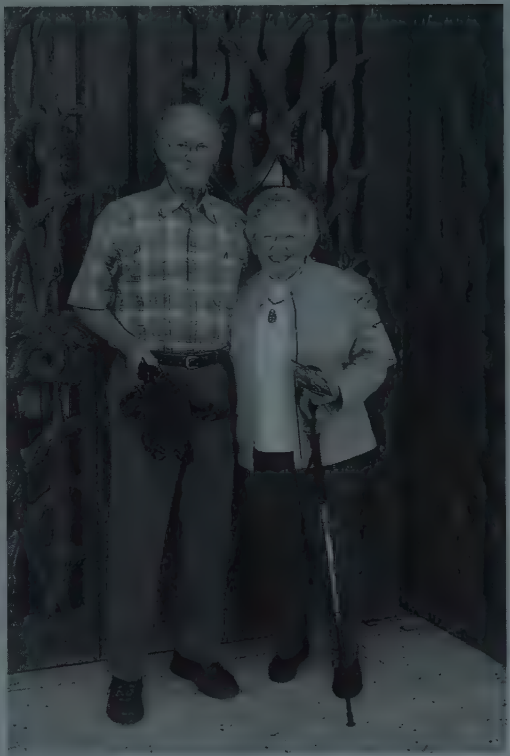
He developed an important scientific formula in acoustics that is still useful in acoustical design today.

His acoustical projects included some of the most prominent structures in San Francisco and northern California, including St. Mary's Cathedral.

He was elected a fellow in the Acoustical Society of America.

He was much loved as a son, brother, husband, father, and grandfather.

He was Dariel Fitzkee, the man with the "trick brain."



Bill and Marcia Dobbs May, 2008

I take this opportunity to thank several people. Although I knew of Dariel Fitzkee and have three editions of his *Trilogy* in my library, had it not been for Curtis Hickman and his love of magic and magic literature, I never would have opened that old and creaky door to the past and taken the first step on what has been one of my more satisfying adventures in magic history. Marcia Fitzroy Dobbs – what a delight and a piece of good fortune it was to discover that the only child of Dariel and Marcia Fitzkee was alive and doing just fine, thank you, in central California. I was able to spend several hours with her and her husband, Bill Dobbs (who had been Dariel's business partner), talking over 70-plus years of memories, reviewing old photographs and scrapbooks, and even 16 mm movies of Dariel performing. This book would not have been possible without the kind assistance of Marcia Dobbs. I sincerely hope that it meets with her approval and that of her children and grandchildren. I would also like to thank my friend Byron Walker, bibliophile extraordinaire, who provided invaluable documents that revealed a very human side to Dariel Fitzkee. Byron also provided my first glimpse at some of Fitzkee's earliest publications as well as the original window card advertising Fitzkee's full evening magic show that appears on the dust jacket of this book. Thanks, too, must go to Stan Allen, editor/publisher of *Magic Magazine*, for his encouragement and for providing historical information, as did the American Museum of Magic. I also thank my friend Richard Kaufmann, editor of *Genii* magazine, for his encouragement and for allowing me to reprint selections from those early issues of *Genii*; and Samuel Patrick Smith for allowing me to reprint selections from "The Fitzkee Parade" from the April 1946 *Linking Ring*. I must single out my friend Barrie Richardson for his willingness to read the text and provide the introduction. Bob Weill once wrote that Dariel Fitzkee was "a guy I think a lot of – and am sorry I don't live nearer." That is how I feel about Barrie Richardson.

There are a number of other friends and acquaintances who provided encouragement, insights, and observations: Mike Caveney, who provided information and photographs; Phil Temple who found an example of what was likely Dariel's first magic set; Carol Stern of the Annawan-Alba Public Library; the LaSalle County Genealogical Society; Bill Freddy, founder and director of the Atkinson Historical Society and Museum; Melissa Fitzkee of York County, Pennsylvania; and Johann and Markus Fitzky of Dorf-Erbach, Germany – all provided information and went out of their way to provide me with valuable historical photographs. For most of the family genealogy from Germany, I am indebted to the work of Helmut and Gerhard Fitzky who wrote *The Fitzky Chronicles*, an excellent family history beginning in 1670. Translations of generations one through three were arranged by Melissa Fitzkee, and the translations of generations four to six were done by Peter Helles, arranged for by Don Orth. And I appreciate the family insights provided by Dariel Norris, granddaughter of Dariel's brother, Dick. She is Dariel's namesake. I am indebted to Dr. Richard Mossey, past international president of The International Brotherhood of Magicians who actually saw the Fitzkee show several times when it played Milwaukee in 1940 and whose excellent recall added so much to the description of the show. And, of course, I thank all those magicians who helped explore "the importance of Dariel Fitzkee," some of whom are mentioned in the context of the book. Human fallibility being what it is, someone will undoubtedly remind me that I overlooked his or her important contribution. I sincerely apologize for any oversights or misinformation that are a part of this book.

I am smarter than Dariel Fitzkee in one respect – I recognized early on that someone else should edit this book for grammar, punctuation, and style. My daughter, Crickett, provided invaluable service by reading the book for content and flow. An exceptional writer herself, she helped me smooth out the rough spots. My good wife, Jann, provided a second edit. An English major like Crickett, Jann is one of those rare individuals for whom grammar is fun! I don't think there was a single page in my draft manuscript that did not benefit from her blue pen. Of course, Jann is much more than my grammarian. In the world of magic, it is rare for one's spouse to tolerate, let alone share, the passion for magic held by the other. Jann has encouraged me in my every magic endeavor, from those early performing days in the 1960s and 1970s, through my editorship of *M-U-M*, to and including my current projects. And that has made the difference.

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SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1939

A Flock of Magicians Toss Confusion Into the Curran

By JOHN HOBART

Twelve masters of the art of mystification assembled in not very solemn conclave last evening at the Curran Theater and put on a show. "The International Magicians in Action," they call themselves, and the entertainment they provide is top-notch trickery.

It's all very confusing, but then it's meant to be. For generations laymen have wondered how those rabbits are whisked out of hats, how those scarfs get themselves tied into knots without the intervention of any human hand, how those coins materialize from nowhere.

The Curran's troupe of magicians, nimble-fingered all of them, deal deeply in this kind of necromancy. They are genial people as well as expert tricksters; being fooled by them is a genuine pleasure.

EGG TO ORANGE

Don't ask this bewildered column for any explanations. We would like to know, as would eveyone else at the Curran last night, how Mr. Dariel Fitzkee is able to slide a sharp-edged knife through the lovely neck of Miss Marcia Adair without cutting her head off. We would like to know, too, how Miss Lucille Hughes, one of the few lady magicians in the business can produce an orange from a grapefruit and an egg from the orange and a small bird from the egg.

One of the best—and most puzzling—acts in the program is Slyter's stunt, which is called "Do You Believe in Ghosts?" (We do, after seeing it.) Mr. Slyter borrows a handkerchief from someone in the audience, ties one end of it into a knot and places it on a chair.

HANDKERCHIEF DANCES

Without any apparent assistance from Mr. Slyter, the handkerchief proceeds to perform incredible capers, acting like a slightly demented ballet dancer. He puts it into a bottle, and what does the handkerchief do? It not only pushes the cork out of the bottle, but it leaps blithely out on the floor.

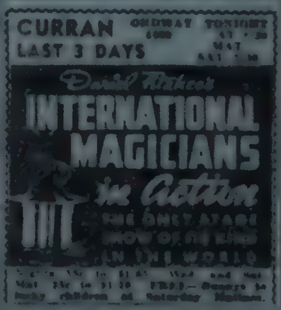
Some of the acts, of course, are better than others, but they are all good. Caro, from Australia, takes off a glove and a huge bird flies out. Tolmack, from Yugo-Slavia, who is an acrobat and a dancer as well as a magician, does some amazingly deft things with a pack of cards. Ming, from China, blandly thumbing his nose at physical laws, drops burning candles into a piece of cloth without even harming it.

Mr. Fitzkee, whose acts have a touch of the macabre about them, has an apparently suicidal meal of razor blades, which come out of his mouth neatly tied to a string. Senor Maldo of Mexico, who acted as master of ceremonies last night, also knows how to befuddle an audience, and so do Donna and Jimmy Eyster (who demonstrate the photographic mind) and Lynn Miller (who makes fluorescent pictures out of odd pieces of cloth).

The show will be at the Curran for a week. If you like to be mystified, it's your show.

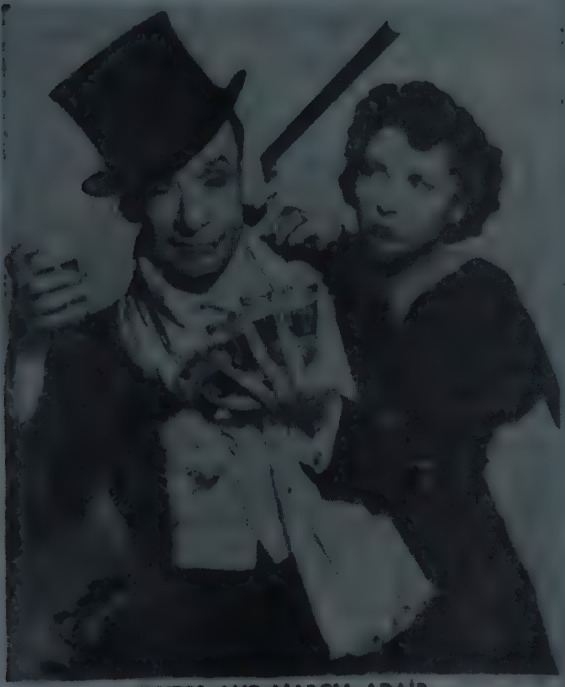
Three Funsters in Theaters

THE EYSTERS.
These people will dumfound you with their mysteries this weekend at the Curran in the "International Magicians" show.


CURRAN
LAST 3 DAYS
INTERNATIONAL MAGICIANS
in Action

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, THURSDAY, 1

Stage - Screen



SLYTER AND MARCIA ADAIR

His trickery baffles the Curran customers

Magicians

They're Doing Fantastic Tricks At the Curran

If you don't have a dancing handkerchief in your home with which to while away the long winter nights your cue is to go to the Curran Theater this week and watch Slyter train a wild hankie with a few simple waves of the hand in the "International Magicians" show.

And if you think it's on a wire, you're due for a great surprise because Mr. Slyter places the kerchief in a bottle, puts a stopper in the top and the piece of cloth jumps right out of the bottle. And not content with that demonstration of magic, Slyter pulls glasses out of thin air and materializes lighted cigarettes at will.

But that's not all. Eleven of Slyter's fellow prestidigitators do equally fantastic tricks in their international acts. The list includes [illegible] Tommack, the Rysters, Ming [illegible] Lucille, Donna, Fitzkee and Marcia Adair.

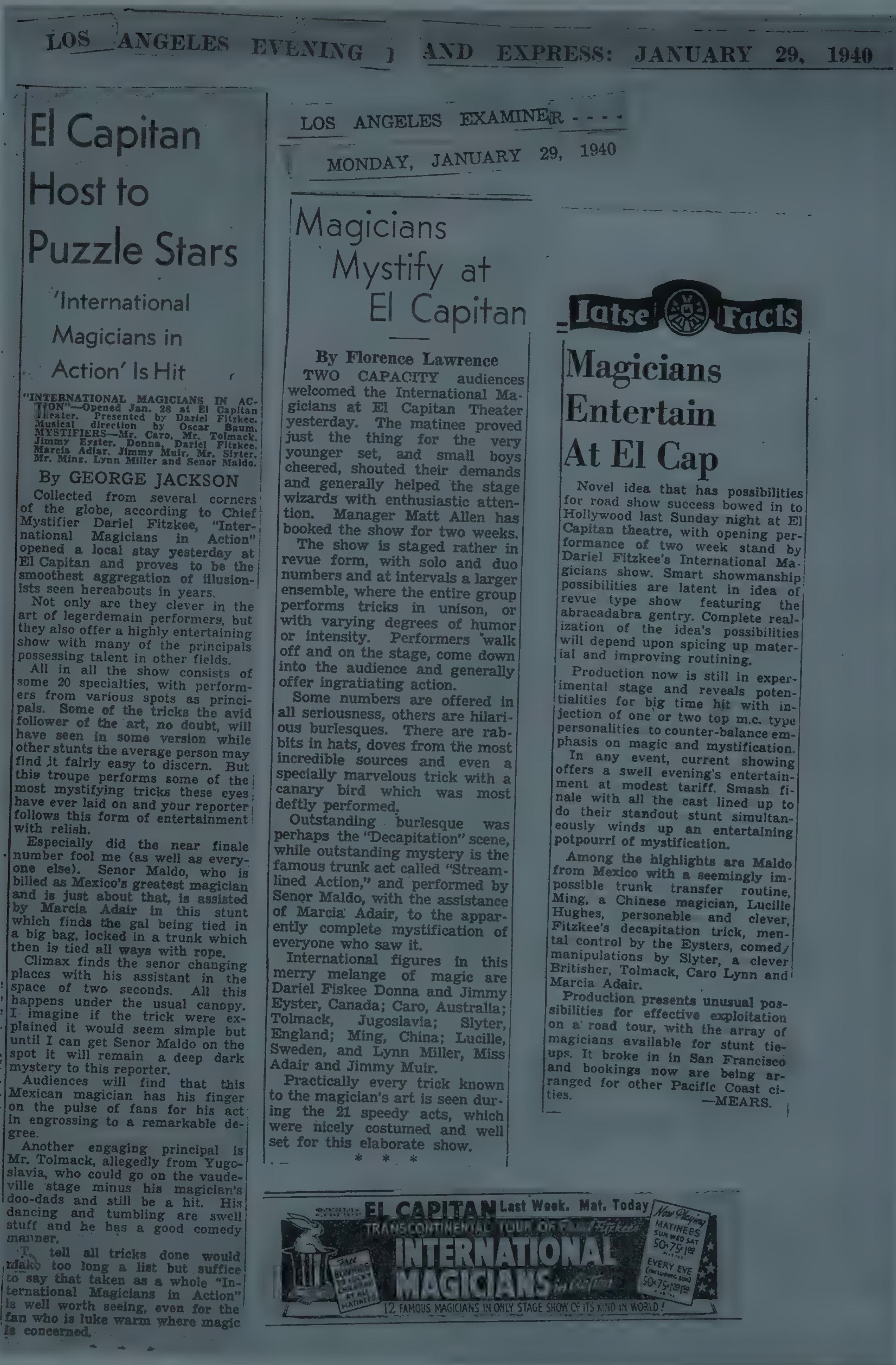
Grand Gadget for One's Home

Marcia Adair and Slyter, two famous stars with "International Magicians in Action," coming to the Civic Auditorium tomorrow night for one performance. In the afternoon they, with the other renowned members of Dariel Fitzkee's company, will give a show for the children at Home of Benevolence, and the shut-ins at Sunnyholme and Santa Clara County Hospital.

THE SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER:

Theaters

LUCILLE HUGHES, one of the performers in the "International Magicians" company, which last night opened a week's engagement at the Curran Theater.



LOS ANGELES EVENING AND EXPRESS: JANUARY 29, 1940

El Capitan Host to Puzzle Stars

'International Magicians in Action' Is Hit

"INTERNATIONAL MAGICIANS IN ACTION"—Opened Jan. 28 at El Capitan Theater. Presented by Dariel Fitzkee. Musical direction by Oscar Baum. MYSTIFIERS—Mr. Caro, Mr. Tolmack, Jimmy Eyster, Donna, Dariel Fitzkee, Marcia Adiar, Jimmy Muir, Mr. Slyter, Mr. Ming, Lynn Miller and Senor Maldo.

By GEORGE JACKSON

Collected from several corners of the globe, according to Chief Mystifier Dariel Fitzkee, "International Magicians in Action" opened a local stay yesterday at El Capitan and proves to be the smoothest aggregation of illusionists seen hereabouts in years.

Not only are they clever in the art of legerdemain performers, but they also offer a highly entertaining show with many of the principals possessing talent in other fields.

All in all the show consists of some 20 specialties, with performers from various spots as principals. Some of the tricks the avid follower of the art, no doubt, will have seen in some version while other stunts the average person may find it fairly easy to discern. But this troupe performs some of the most mystifying tricks these eyes have ever laid on and your reporter follows this form of entertainment with relish.

Especially did the near finale number fool me (as well as everyone else). Senor Maldo, who is billed as Mexico's greatest magician and is just about that, is assisted by Marcia Adair in this stunt which finds the gal being tied in a big bag, locked in a trunk which then is tied all ways with rope.

Climax finds the senor changing places with his assistant in the space of two seconds. All this happens under the usual canopy. I imagine if the trick were explained it would seem simple but until I can get Senor Maldo on the spot it will remain a deep dark mystery to this reporter.

Audiences will find that this Mexican magician has his finger on the pulse of fans for his act in engrossing to a remarkable degree.

Another engaging principal is Mr. Tolmack, allegedly from Yugoslavia, who could go on the vaudeville stage minus his magician's doo-dads and still be a hit. His dancing and tumbling are swell stuff and he has a good comedy manner.

To tell all tricks done would make too long a list but suffice to say that taken as a whole "International Magicians in Action" is well worth seeing, even for the fan who is luke warm where magic is concerned.

LOS ANGELES EXAMINER

MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 1940

Magicians Mystify at El Capitan

By Florence Lawrence

TWO CAPACITY audiences welcomed the International Magicians at El Capitan Theater yesterday. The matinee proved just the thing for the very younger set, and small boys cheered, shouted their demands and generally helped the stage wizards with enthusiastic attention. Manager Matt Allen has booked the show for two weeks.

The show is staged rather in revue form, with solo and duo numbers and at intervals a larger ensemble, where the entire group performs tricks in unison, or with varying degrees of humor or intensity. Performers walk off and on the stage, come down into the audience and generally offer ingratiating action.

Some numbers are offered in all seriousness, others are hilarious burlesques. There are rabbits in hats, doves from the most incredible sources and even a specially marvelous trick with a canary bird which was most deftly performed.

Outstanding burlesque was perhaps the "Decapitation" scene, while outstanding mystery is the famous trunk act called "Streamlined Action," and performed by Senor Maldo, with the assistance of Marcia Adair, to the apparently complete mystification of everyone who saw it.

International figures in this merry melange of magic are Dariel Fiskee Donna and Jimmy Eyster, Canada; Caro, Australia; Tolmack, Jugoslavia; Slyter, England; Ming, China; Lucille, Sweden, and Lynn Miller, Miss Adair and Jimmy Muir.

Practically every trick known to the magician's art is seen during the 21 speedy acts, which were nicely costumed and well set for this elaborate show.

* * *

Iatse Facts

Magicians Entertain At El Cap

Novel idea that has possibilities for road show success bowed in to Hollywood last Sunday night at El Capitan theatre, with opening performance of two week stand by Dariel Fitzkee's International Magicians show. Smart showmanship possibilities are latent in idea of revue type show featuring the abracadabra gentry. Complete realization of the idea's possibilities will depend upon spicing up material and improving routining.

Production now is still in experimental stage and reveals potentialities for big time hit with injection of one or two top m.c. type personalities to counter-balance emphasis on magic and mystification.

In any event, current showing offers a swell evening's entertainment at modest tariff. Smash finale with all the cast lined up to do their standout stunt simultaneously winds up an entertaining potpourri of mystification.

Among the highlights are Maldo from Mexico with a seemingly impossible trunk transfer routine, Ming, a Chinese magician, Lucille Hughes, personable and clever, Fitzkee's decapitation trick, mental control by the Eysters, comedy manipulations by Slyter, a clever Britisher, Tolmack, Caro Lynn and Marcia Adair.

Production presents unusual possibilities for effective exploitation on a road tour, with the array of magicians available for stunt tie-ups. It broke in in San Francisco and bookings now are being arranged for other Pacific Coast cities.

—MEARS.

EL CAPITAN Last Week. Mat. Today

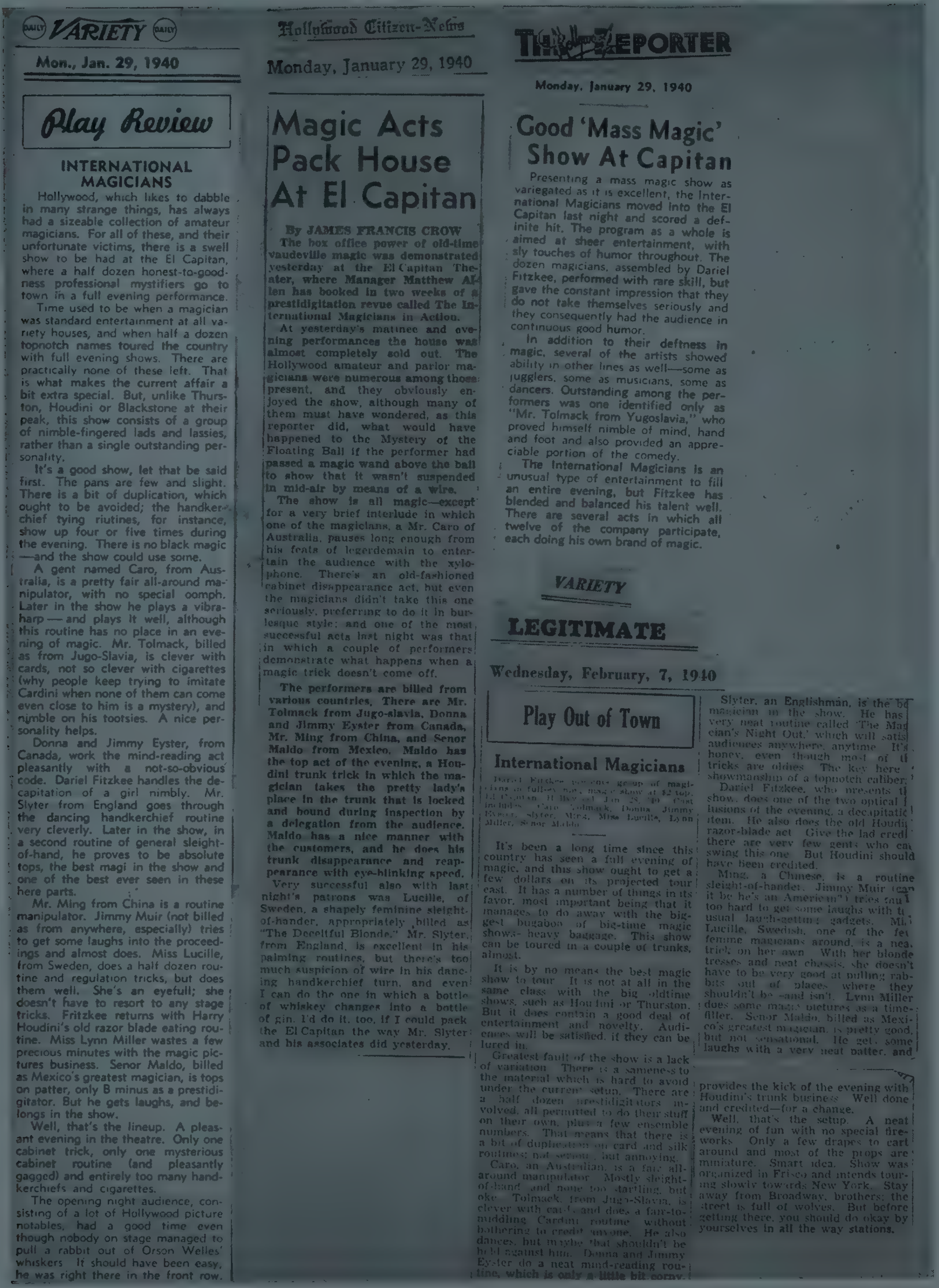
TRANSCONTINENTAL TOUR OF Fitzkee

INTERNATIONAL MAGICIANS in Action

Now Playing
MATINEES SUN WED SAT 50-75-1.00
EVERY EVE (including Sun) 50-75-1.00-1.50

Free ... AT ALL MATINEES

12 FAMOUS MAGICIANS IN ONLY STAGE SHOW OF ITS KIND IN WORLD!



DAILY VARIETY DAILY

Mon., Jan. 29, 1940

Play Review

INTERNATIONAL MAGICIANS

Hollywood, which likes to dabble in many strange things, has always had a sizeable collection of amateur magicians. For all of these, and their unfortunate victims, there is a swell show to be had at the El Capitan, where a half dozen honest-to-goodness professional mystifiers go to town in a full evening performance.

Time used to be when a magician was standard entertainment at all variety houses, and when half a dozen topnotch names toured the country with full evening shows. There are practically none of these left. That is what makes the current affair a bit extra special. But, unlike Thurston, Houdini or Blackstone at their peak, this show consists of a group of nimble-fingered lads and lassies, rather than a single outstanding personality.

It's a good show, let that be said first. The pans are few and slight. There is a bit of duplication, which ought to be avoided; the handkerchief tying riutines, for instance, show up four or five times during the evening. There is no black magic—and the show could use some.

A gent named Caro, from Australia, is a pretty fair all-around manipulator, with no special oomph. Later in the show he plays a vibraharp — and plays it well, although this routine has no place in an evening of magic. Mr. Tolmack, billed as from Jugo-Slavia, is clever with cards, not so clever with cigarettes (why people keep trying to imitate Cardini when none of them can come even close to him is a mystery), and nimble on his tootsies. A nice personality helps.

Donna and Jimmy Eyster, from Canada, work the mind-reading act pleasantly with a not-so-obvious code. Dariel Fitzkee handles the decapitation of a girl nimbly. Mr. Slyter from England goes through the dancing handkerchief routine very cleverly. Later in the show, in a second routine of general sleight-of-hand, he proves to be absolute tops, the best magi in the show and one of the best ever seen in these here parts.

Mr. Ming from China is a routine manipulator. Jimmy Muir (not billed as from anywhere, especially) tries to get some laughs into the proceedings and almost does. Miss Lucille, from Sweden, does a half dozen routine and regulation tricks, but does them well. She's an eyefull; she doesn't have to resort to any stage tricks. Fritzkee returns with Harry Houdini's old razor blade eating routine. Miss Lynn Miller wastes a few precious minutes with the magic pictures business. Senor Maldo, billed as Mexico's greatest magician, is tops on patter, only B minus as a prestidigitator. But he gets laughs, and belongs in the show.

Well, that's the lineup. A pleasant evening in the theatre. Only one cabinet trick, only one mysterious cabinet routine (and pleasantly gagged) and entirely too many handkerchiefs and cigarettes.

The opening night audience, consisting of a lot of Hollywood picture notables, had a good time even though nobody on stage managed to pull a rabbit out of Orson Welles' whiskers. It should have been easy, he was right there in the front row.

Hollywood Citizen-News

Monday, January 29, 1940

Magic Acts Pack House At El Capitan

By JAMES FRANCIS CROW

The box office power of old-time vaudeville magic was demonstrated yesterday at the El Capitan Theater, where Manager Matthew Allen has booked in two weeks of a prestidigitation revue called The International Magicians in Action.

At yesterday's matinee and evening performances the house was almost completely sold out. The Hollywood amateur and parlor magicians were numerous among those present, and they obviously enjoyed the show, although many of them must have wondered, as this reporter did, what would have happened to the Mystery of the Floating Ball if the performer had passed a magic wand above the ball to show that it wasn't suspended in mid-air by means of a wire.

The show is all magic—except for a very brief interlude in which one of the magicians, a Mr. Caro of Australia, pauses long enough from his feats of legerdemain to entertain the audience with the xylophone. There's an old-fashioned cabinet disappearance act, but even the magicians didn't take this one seriously, preferring to do it in burlesque style; and one of the most successful acts last night was that in which a couple of performers demonstrate what happens when a magic trick doesn't come off.

The performers are billed from various countries. There are Mr. Tolmack from Jugo-slavia, Donna and Jimmy Eyster from Canada, Mr. Ming from China, and Senor Maldo from Mexico. Maldo has the top act of the evening, a Houdini trunk trick in which the magician takes the pretty lady's place in the trunk that is locked and bound during inspection by a delegation from the audience. Maldo has a nice manner with the customers, and he does his trunk disappearance and reappearance with eye-blinking speed.

Very successful also with last night's patrons was Lucille, of Sweden, a shapely feminine sleight-of-hander, appropriately billed as "The Deceitful Blonde." Mr. Slyter, from England, is excellent in his palming routines, but there's too much suspicion of wire in his dancing handkerchief turn, and even I can do the one in which a bottle of whiskey changes into a bottle of gin. I'd do it, too, if I could pack the El Capitan the way Mr. Slyter and his associates did yesterday.

THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

Monday, January 29, 1940

Good 'Mass Magic' Show At Capitan

Presenting a mass magic show as variegated as it is excellent, the International Magicians moved into the El Capitan last night and scored a definite hit. The program as a whole is aimed at sheer entertainment, with sly touches of humor throughout. The dozen magicians, assembled by Dariel Fitzkee, performed with rare skill, but gave the constant impression that they do not take themselves seriously and they consequently had the audience in continuous good humor.

In addition to their deftness in magic, several of the artists showed ability in other lines as well—some as jugglers, some as musicians, some as dancers. Outstanding among the performers was one identified only as "Mr. Tolmack from Yugoslavia," who proved himself nimble of mind, hand and foot and also provided an appreciable portion of the comedy.

The International Magicians is an unusual type of entertainment to fill an entire evening, but Fitzkee has blended and balanced his talent well. There are several acts in which all twelve of the company participate, each doing his own brand of magic.

VARIETY

LEGITIMATE

Wednesday, February, 7, 1940

Play Out of Town

International Magicians

Dariel Fitzkee presents group of magicians in full-evening magic show at $2 top, El Capitan, Hollywood, Jan. 28, '40. Cast includes Caro, Tolmack, Donna, Jimmy Eyster, Slyter, Ming, Miss Lucille, Lynn Miller, Senor Maldo.

It's been a long time since this country has seen a full evening of magic, and this show ought to get a few dollars on its projected tour east. It has a number of things in its favor, most important being that it manages to do away with the biggest bugaboo of big-time magic shows—heavy baggage. This show can be toured in a couple of trunks, almost.

It is by no means the best magic show to tour. It is not at all in the same class with the big oldtime shows, such as Houdini or Thurston. But it does contain a good deal of entertainment and novelty. Audiences will be satisfied, if they can be lured in.

Greatest fault of the show is a lack of variation. There is a sameness to the material which is hard to avoid under the current setup. There are a half dozen prestidigitators involved, all permitted to do their stuff on their own, plus a few ensemble numbers. That means that there is a bit of duplication on card and silk routines; not serious, but annoying.

Caro, an Australian, is a fair all-around manipulator. Mostly sleight-of-hand and none too startling, but oke. Tolmack, from Jugo-Slavia, is clever with cards, and does a fair-to-middling Cardini routine without bothering to credit anyone. He also dances, but maybe that shouldn't be held against him. Donna and Jimmy Eyster do a neat mind-reading routine, which is only a little bit corny.

Slyter, an Englishman, is the be magician in the show. He has very neat routine called 'The Mag cian's Night Out,' which will satis audiences anywhere, anytime. It's honey, even though most of th tricks are oldies. The key here showmanship of a topnotch caliber.

Dariel Fitzkee, who presents th show, does one of the two optical lusions of the evening, a decapitatio item. He also does the old Houdi razor-blade act. Give the lad cred there are very few gents who ca swing this one. But Houdini should have been credited.

Ming, a Chinese, is a routine sleight-of-hander. Jimmy Muir (can it be he's an American?) tries [illegible] too hard to get some laughs with th usual laugh-getting gadgets. Mi Lucille, Swedish, one of the fe femme magicians around, is a nea trick on her own. With her blonde tresses and neat chassis, she doesn't have to be very good at pulling rabbits out of places where they shouldn't be—and isn't. Lynn Miller does some magic pictures as a time-filler. Senor Maldo, billed as Mexico's greatest magician, is pretty good, but not sensational. He gets some laughs with a very neat patter, and provides the kick of the evening with Houdini's trunk business. Well done and credited—for a change.

Well, that's the setup. A neat evening of fun with no special fireworks. Only a few drapes to cart around and most of the props are miniature. Smart idea. Show was organized in Frisco and intends touring slowly towards New York. Stay away from Broadway, brothers; the street is full of wolves. But before getting there, you should do okay by yourselves in all the way stations.

Los Angeles Examiner

MARCH OF EVENTS SECTION
JANUARY 28, 1940
Section V--Page 6

LYNN and DARIEL FITZKEE with "International Magicians in Action," starting engagement today at El Capitan.

• Twelve of the world's finest magicians, with their assistants and technical staff, will step off the train at the Union Station today to appear at the El Capitan Theater this afternoon.

Dariel Fitzkee's International Magicians In Action is a full-time show presented by prize-winning professional magicians, specialists in their respective fields of entertainment.

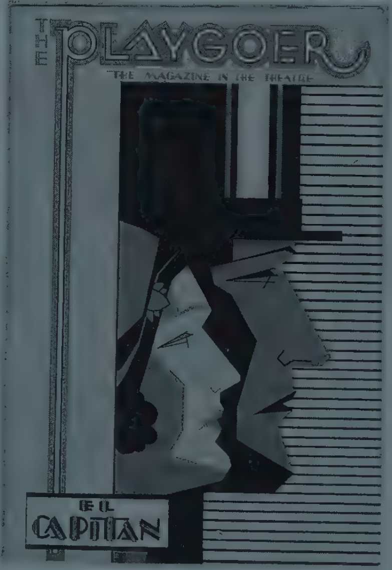
Among the stars are Maldo, the Mexican, who evolves eggs out of slips of paper bouncing off his fan; Caro, the Australian, who makes an unsuspended electric light float over the audience; Ming, the Chinese sorcerer, in Oriental magic; Slyter, in his character portrayal, "A Magician's Night Out," and many others.

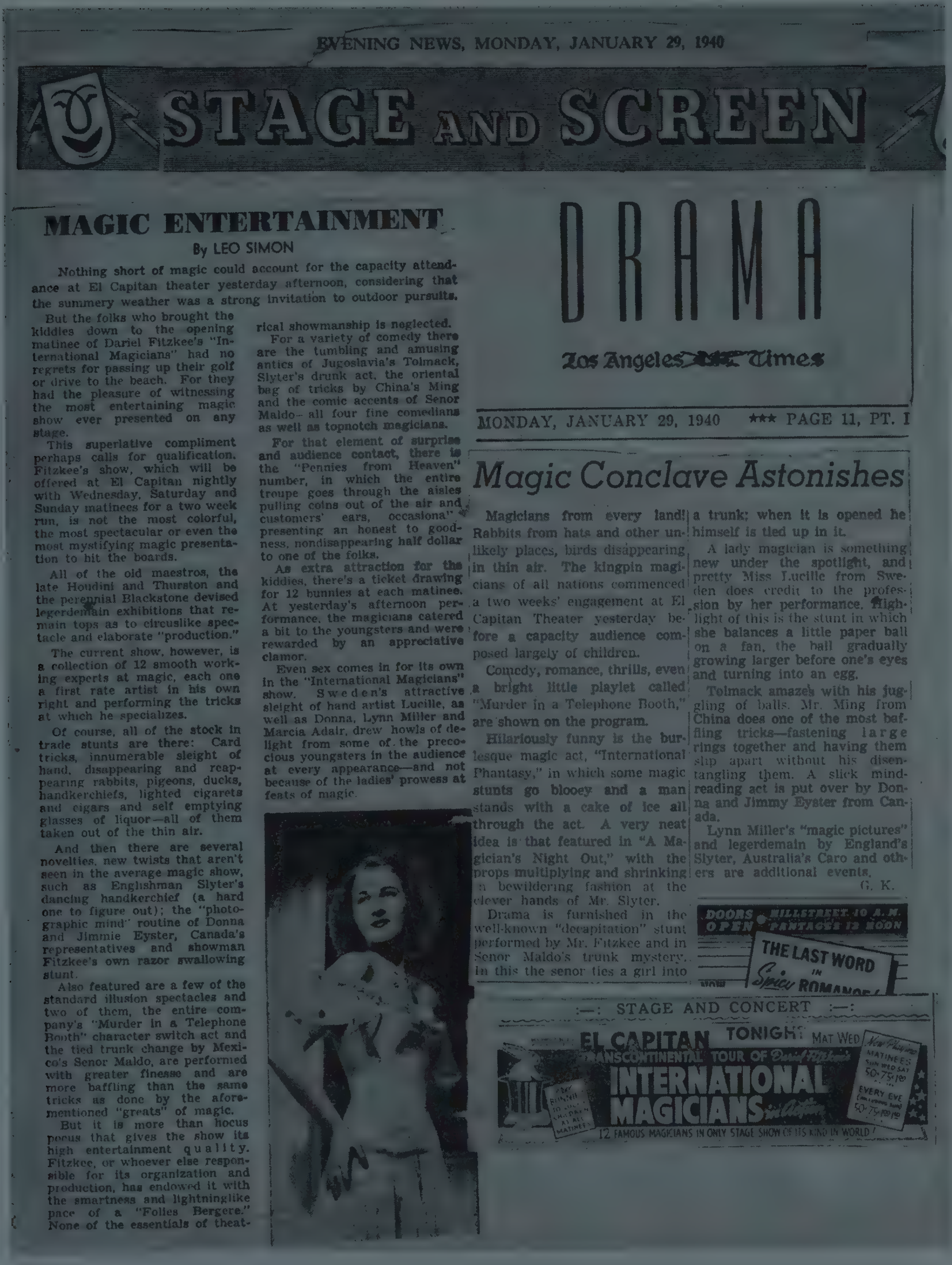
Carriers See Magicians Perform

MAGICIANS
MATINEE TODAY

Citizen-News carrier boys shown in the top photo waiting to be admitted to the International Magicians' opening show at the El Capitan Theater yesterday. Among the 200 who were taken back stage to meet the magicians after the show were the three in the bottom photo shown getting a close up of DARIEL FITZKEE, Oakland magician, performing a rabbit trick. From left to right the boys are RONALD WOOD, JIM ROLLINS and BILLY GOREE.

—Porter S. Cleveland photos.


THE PLAYGOER
THE MAGAZINE IN THE THEATRE
EL CAPITAN



EVENING NEWS, MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 1940

STAGE AND SCREEN

MAGIC ENTERTAINMENT

By LEO SIMON

Nothing short of magic could account for the capacity attendance at El Capitan theater yesterday afternoon, considering that the summery weather was a strong invitation to outdoor pursuits.

But the folks who brought the kiddies down to the opening matinee of Dariel Fitzkee's "International Magicians" had no regrets for passing up their golf or drive to the beach. For they had the pleasure of witnessing the most entertaining magic show ever presented on any stage.

This superlative compliment perhaps calls for qualification. Fitzkee's show, which will be offered at El Capitan nightly with Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday matinees for a two week run, is not the most colorful, the most spectacular or even the most mystifying magic presentation to hit the boards.

All of the old maestros, the late Houdini and Thurston and the perennial Blackstone devised legerdemain exhibitions that remain tops as to circuslike spectacle and elaborate "production."

The current show, however, is a collection of 12 smooth working experts at magic, each one a first rate artist in his own right and performing the tricks at which he specializes.

Of course, all of the stock in trade stunts are there: Card tricks, innumerable sleight of hand, disappearing and reappearing rabbits, pigeons, ducks, handkerchiefs, lighted cigarets and cigars and self emptying glasses of liquor—all of them taken out of the thin air.

And then there are several novelties, new twists that aren't seen in the average magic show, such as Englishman Slyter's dancing handkerchief (a hard one to figure out); the "photographic mind" routine of Donna and Jimmie Eyster, Canada's representatives and showman Fitzkee's own razor swallowing stunt.

Also featured are a few of the standard illusion spectacles and two of them, the entire company's "Murder in a Telephone Booth" character switch act and the tied trunk change by Mexico's Senor Maldo, are performed with greater finesse and are more baffling than the same tricks as done by the aforementioned "greats" of magic.

But it is more than hocus pocus that gives the show its high entertainment quality. Fitzkee, or whoever else responsible for its organization and production, has endowed it with the smartness and lightninglike pace of a "Folies Bergere." None of the essentials of theatrical showmanship is neglected.

For a variety of comedy there are the tumbling and amusing antics of Jugoslavia's Tolmack, Slyter's drunk act, the oriental bag of tricks by China's Ming and the comic accents of Senor Maldo—all four fine comedians as well as topnotch magicians.

For that element of surprise and audience contact, there is the "Pennies from Heaven" number, in which the entire troupe goes through the aisles pulling coins out of the air and customers' ears, occasional" presenting an honest to goodness, nondisappearing half dollar to one of the folks.

As extra attraction for the kiddies, there's a ticket drawing for 12 bunnies at each matinee. At yesterday's afternoon performance, the magicians catered a bit to the youngsters and were rewarded by an appreciative clamor.

Even sex comes in for its own in the "International Magicians" show. Sweden's attractive sleight of hand artist Lucille, as well as Donna, Lynn Miller and Marcia Adair, drew howls of delight from some of the precocious youngsters in the audience at every appearance—and not because of the ladies' prowess at feats of magic.

DRAMA

Los Angeles Times

MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 1940 *** PAGE 11, PT. I

Magic Conclave Astonishes

Magicians from every land! Rabbits from hats and other unlikely places, birds disappearing in thin air. The kingpin magicians of all nations commenced a two weeks' engagement at El Capitan Theater yesterday before a capacity audience composed largely of children.

Comedy, romance, thrills, even a bright little playlet called "Murder in a Telephone Booth," are shown on the program.

Hilariously funny is the burlesque magic act, "International Phantasy," in which some magic stunts go blooey and a man stands with a cake of ice all through the act. A very neat idea is that featured in "A Magician's Night Out," with the props multiplying and shrinking in bewildering fashion at the clever hands of Mr. Slyter.

Drama is furnished in the well-known "decapitation" stunt performed by Mr. Fitzkee and in Senor Maldo's trunk mystery. In this the senor ties a girl into a trunk; when it is opened he himself is tied up in it.

A lady magician is something new under the spotlight, and pretty Miss Lucille from Sweden does credit to the profession by her performance. Highlight of this is the stunt in which she balances a little paper ball on a fan, the ball gradually growing larger before one's eyes and turning into an egg.

Tolmack amazes with his juggling of balls. Mr. Ming from China does one of the most baffling tricks—fastening large rings together and having them slip apart without his disentangling them. A slick mind-reading act is put over by Donna and Jimmy Eyster from Canada.

Lynn Miller's "magic pictures" and legerdemain by England's Slyter, Australia's Caro and others are additional events.

G. K.

DOORS OPEN • HILLSTREET 10 A. M. PANTAGES 12 NOON

THE LAST WORD IN Spicy ROMANCE!

:—: STAGE AND CONCERT :—:

EL CAPITAN TONIGHT MAT WED

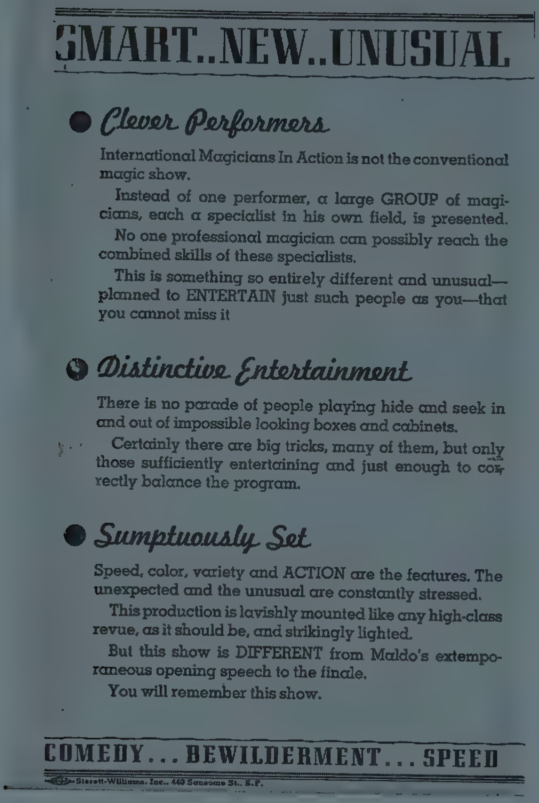
TRANSCONTINENTAL TOUR OF Dariel Fitzkee's

INTERNATIONAL MAGICIANS in Action

New Playing MATINEES SUN WED SAT 50·75·1.00

EVERY EVE 50·75·1.00 1.50

12 FAMOUS MAGICIANS IN ONLY STAGE SHOW OF ITS KIND IN WORLD!



SMART..NEW..UNUSUAL

● Clever Performers

International Magicians In Action is not the conventional magic show.

Instead of one performer, a large GROUP of magicians, each a specialist in his own field, is presented.

No one professional magician can possibly reach the combined skills of these specialists.

This is something so entirely different and unusual—planned to ENTERTAIN just such people as you—that you cannot miss it

● Distinctive Entertainment

There is no parade of people playing hide and seek in and out of impossible looking boxes and cabinets.

Certainly there are big tricks, many of them, but only those sufficiently entertaining and just enough to correctly balance the program.

● Sumptuously Set

Speed, color, variety and ACTION are the features. The unexpected and the unusual are constantly stressed.

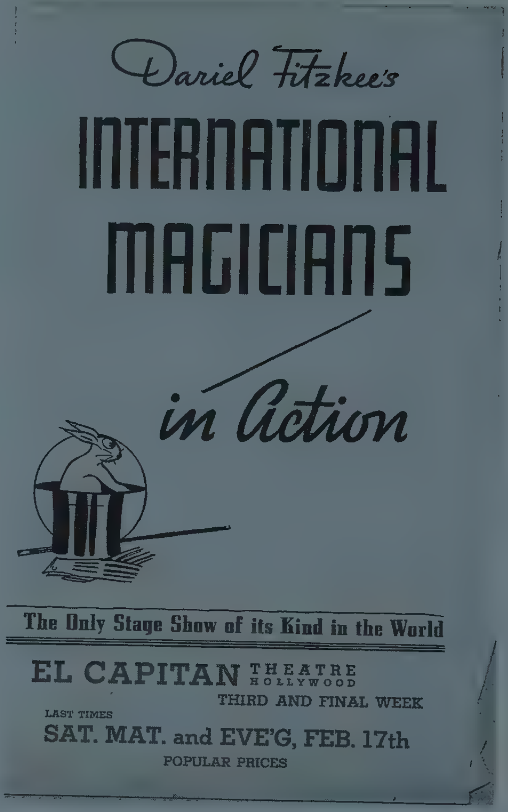
This production is lavishly mounted like any high-class revue, as it should be, and strikingly lighted.

But this show is DIFFERENT from Maldo's extemporaneous opening speech to the finale.

You will remember this show.

COMEDY . . . BEWILDERMENT . . . SPEED

Sterett-Williams, Inc., 440 Sansome St., S.F.



Dariel Fitzkee's

INTERNATIONAL MAGICIANS in Action

The Only Stage Show of its Kind in the World

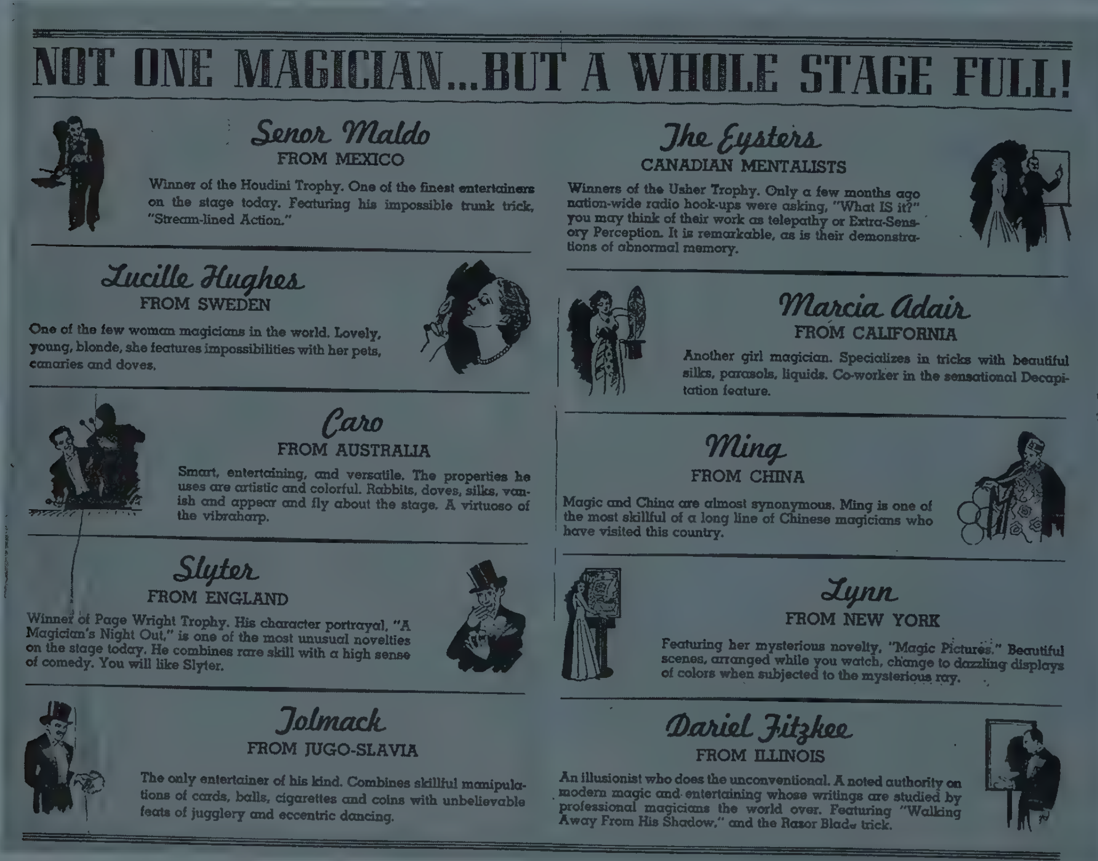
EL CAPITAN THEATRE HOLLYWOOD

THIRD AND FINAL WEEK

LAST TIMES

SAT. MAT. and EVE'G, FEB. 17th

POPULAR PRICES



NOT ONE MAGICIAN...BUT A WHOLE STAGE FULL!

Senor Maldo
FROM MEXICO

Winner of the Houdini Trophy. One of the finest entertainers on the stage today. Featuring his impossible trunk trick, "Stream-lined Action."

Lucille Hughes
FROM SWEDEN

One of the few woman magicians in the world. Lovely, young, blonde, she features impossibilities with her pets, canaries and doves.

Caro
FROM AUSTRALIA

Smart, entertaining, and versatile. The properties he uses are artistic and colorful. Rabbits, doves, silks, vanish and appear and fly about the stage. A virtuoso of the vibraharp.

Slyter
FROM ENGLAND

Winner of Page Wright Trophy. His character portrayal, "A Magician's Night Out," is one of the most unusual novelties on the stage today. He combines rare skill with a high sense of comedy. You will like Slyter.

Tolmack
FROM JUGO-SLAVIA

The only entertainer of his kind. Combines skillful manipulations of cards, balls, cigarettes and coins with unbelievable feats of jugglery and eccentric dancing.

The Eysters
CANADIAN MENTALISTS

Winners of the Usher Trophy. Only a few months ago nation-wide radio hook-ups were asking, "What IS it?" you may think of their work as telepathy or Extra-Sensory Perception. It is remarkable, as is their demonstrations of abnormal memory.

Marcia Adair
FROM CALIFORNIA

Another girl magician. Specializes in tricks with beautiful silks, parasols, liquids. Co-worker in the sensational Decapitation feature.

Ming
FROM CHINA

Magic and China are almost synonymous. Ming is one of the most skillful of a long line of Chinese magicians who have visited this country.

Lynn
FROM NEW YORK

Featuring her mysterious novelty, "Magic Pictures." Beautiful scenes, arranged while you watch, change to dazzling displays of colors when subjected to the mysterious ray.

Dariel Fitzkee
FROM ILLINOIS

An illusionist who does the unconventional. A noted authority on modern magic and entertaining whose writings are studied by professional magicians the world over. Featuring "Walking Away From His Shadow," and the Razor Blade trick.

"SCRIPT" Magazine Calls It "Magic with a Noel Coward Touch."

vides excellent and intelligent fun. The writing is of all shades, good, bad, and indifferent, and it's a pity that the first-rate scenes were outnumbered by those which were repetitious or hazy. The churchmen are well observed and real, acted with vigor and credibility by Frederick Blanchard, as the bewildered Benedictine monk of the title role. Ian Vohr as the canon, and Jamesson Shade as his bishop. The accents, Scotch, Irish, and English, presented problems which were neatly solved, but the staging—especially scenes of tumult, in which the Pasadena Playhouse has never excelled—was unimaginative and at times woefully amateurish. So were the actors who impersonated worldlings, and the "miracle" was so clumsily contrived that I couldn't blame Rome for doubting its validity. Not spiritually, as the unconvincing cardinal stated, but because the physical manifestations were so crudely handled. Fay Sappington and Robert Rockwell made one grateful for their contributions in minor roles. And I couldn't help wondering what rating the Legion of Decency would give to such a blasphemous and balmy show.

-

EVEN the miraculous Orson Welles and his bearded cohorts sat up and took notice at Dariel Fitzkee's "International Magicians" which began its engagement at El Capitan with greater and more spontaneous acclaim than any stage show has had in this town since Matt Allen's house played host to the swing Mikado. What's more, the frantic applause of a packed auditorium was deserved. Not since Sonja Henie began her personal appearances, have we had anything so novel, so surprising and gasp-making as this cleverly devised entertainment which presents assorted and personable magicians in a streamlined, up-to-the-minute revue mainly devoted to legerdemain. This reviewer has never seen anything like it before and doubts if you have either.

If you think the show is just a collection of vaudeville antiques, you're all wrong. Bigger and more celebrated shows seldom have the zest, the pace and the variety which characterizes this one, and although ours is a sadly befuddled world, "International Magicians" is the first thing to make mystification an absolute pleasure. It makes you feel young again; eager, and superior to reality—and that's a very nice feeling. The "acts" (and I don't know what else to call them!) are so uniformly good that I shall not attempt to describe any; but just to indicate the range, there are the best card tricks you can ever hope to see. Also the memory trick, magic pictures, sudden manifestations of flora and fauna, a sophisticated romp called "A Magician's Night Out," spoof of a murder mystery, and a knockout version of the famed Houdini trunk illusion. Marvelous magic, with a Noel Coward touch—and if that mystifies you, just get yourselves to the theater and explore.

This attraction hasn't been to New York yet, so it will give you the thrill of discovery as well as the time of your life. Sit down front, forego alcoholic refreshment or you'll think you're mad, prepare to say goodbye to reason for an evening. Don't be too easy-going about reservations, either, because this is a "hit" show, and you can't hope to be conversationally correct unless you've seen it. Judged by first-night indications it could remain here for many weeks, but it's supposed to tour Eastward. And it even has sex-appeal, if you must have it, which certainly makes it unique—if you remember your magicians.

- - -

THIS seems to be the year for jewelry—women who attended a dinner at the Winfield Sheehans bedecked in precious gems as though for grand opera. Jeritza herself in diamonds and emeralds—necklace, broach, bracelets—whoppers! Mrs. Montemezzi and Mrs. Frank Powell in diamonds and pearls.

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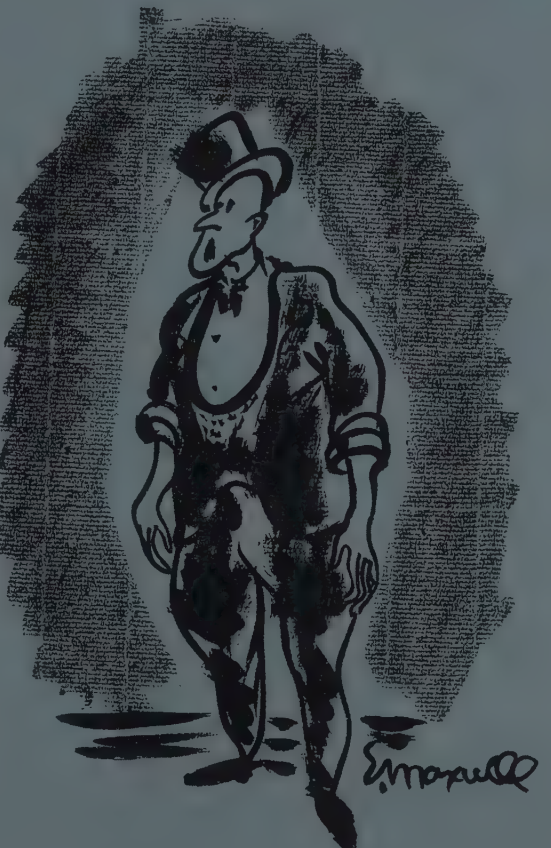
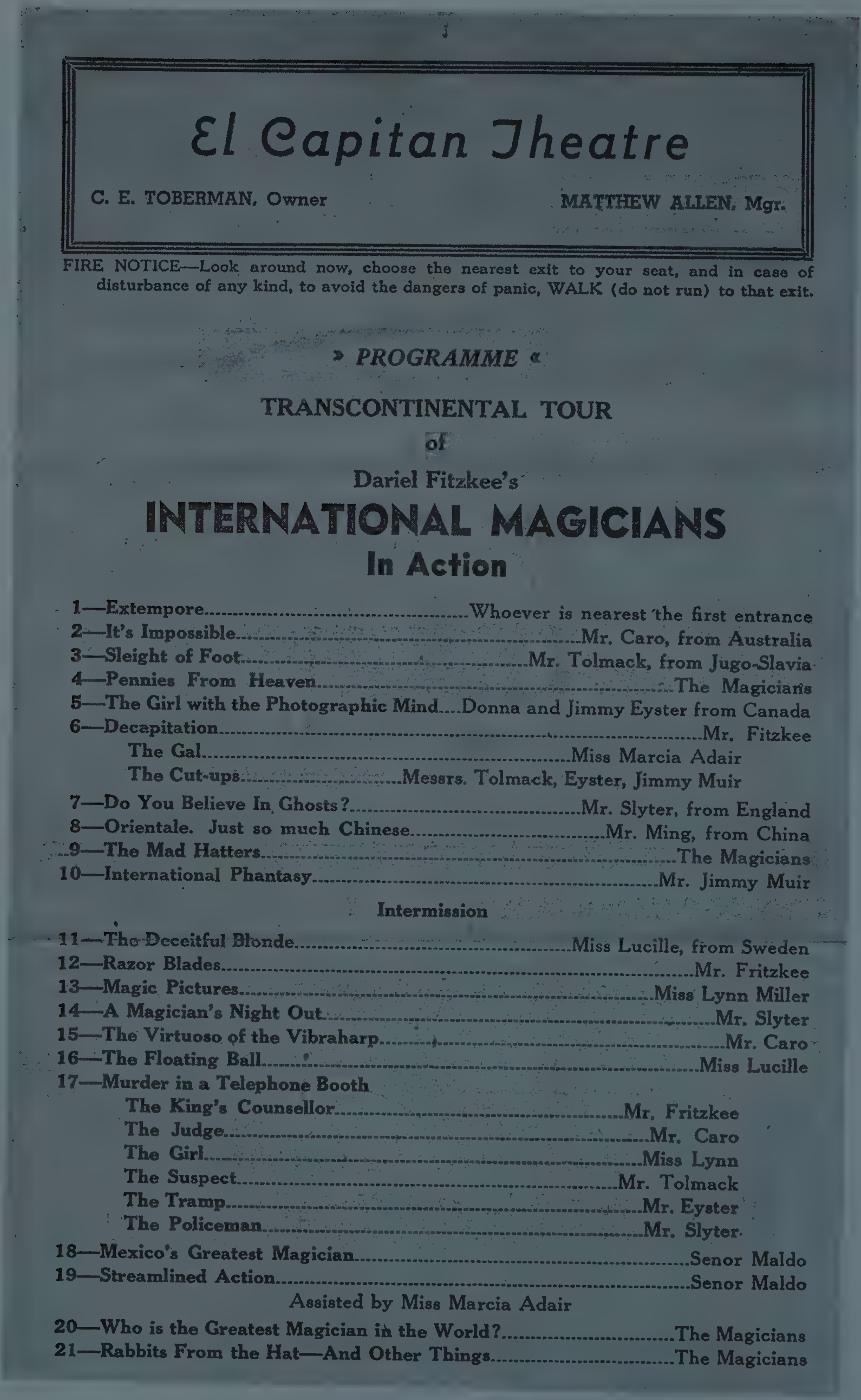


"Is there a rabbit in the audience?"

"Greater and more spontaneous acclaim than any stage show since Swing Mikado . . . Frantic applause was deserved . . . Not since Sonja Henie . . . has anything so novel, so surprising, so gasp making . . . Cleverly devised . . . Never anything like it before. MARVELOUS . . . A HIT SHOW."



El Capitan Theatre

C. E. TOBERMAN, Owner — MATTHEW ALLEN, Mgr.

FIRE NOTICE—Look around now, choose the nearest exit to your seat, and in case of disturbance of any kind, to avoid the dangers of panic, WALK (do not run) to that exit.

» PROGRAMME «

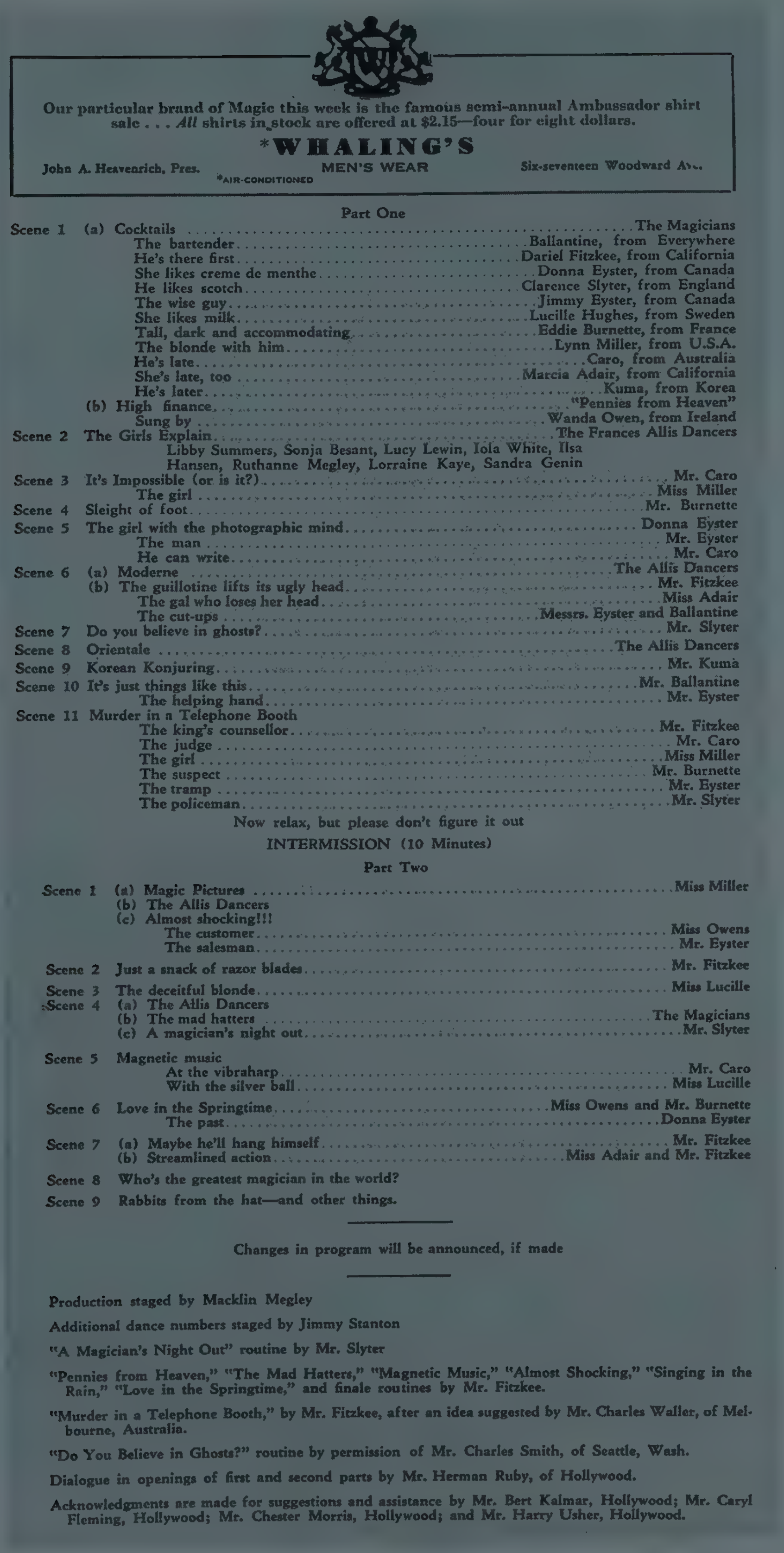
TRANSCONTINENTAL TOUR

of

Dariel Fitzkee's

INTERNATIONAL MAGICIANS
In Action

1—Extempore	Whoever is nearest the first entrance
2—It's Impossible	Mr. Caro, from Australia
3—Sleight of Foot	Mr. Tolmack, from Jugo-Slavia
4—Pennies From Heaven	The Magicians
5—The Girl with the Photographic Mind	Donna and Jimmy Eyster from Canada
6—Decapitation	Mr. Fitzkee
The Gal	Miss Marcia Adair
The Cut-ups	Messrs. Tolmack, Eyster, Jimmy Muir
7—Do You Believe In Ghosts?	Mr. Slyter, from England
8—Orientale. Just so much Chinese	Mr. Ming, from China
9—The Mad Hatters	The Magicians
10—International Phantasy	Mr. Jimmy Muir
Intermission	
11—The Deceitful Blonde	Miss Lucille, from Sweden
12—Razor Blades	Mr. Fritzkee
13—Magic Pictures	Miss Lynn Miller
14—A Magician's Night Out	Mr. Slyter
15—The Virtuoso of the Vibraharp	Mr. Caro
16—The Floating Ball	Miss Lucille
17—Murder in a Telephone Booth	
The King's Counsellor	Mr. Fritzkee
The Judge	Mr. Caro
The Girl	Miss Lynn
The Suspect	Mr. Tolmack
The Tramp	Mr. Eyster
The Policeman	Mr. Slyter
18—Mexico's Greatest Magician	Senor Maldo
19—Streamlined Action	Senor Maldo
Assisted by Miss Marcia Adair	
20—Who is the Greatest Magician in the World?	The Magicians
21—Rabbits From the Hat—And Other Things	The Magicians



Our particular brand of Magic this week is the famous semi-annual Ambassador shirt sale . . . *All* shirts in stock are offered at $2.15—four for eight dollars.

***WHALING'S**

John A. Heavenrich, Pres.
MEN'S WEAR
Six-seventeen Woodward Ave.
*AIR-CONDITIONED

Part One

Scene 1	(a) Cocktails	The Magicians
	The bartender	Ballantine, from Everywhere
	He's there first	Dariel Fitzkee, from California
	She likes creme de menthe	Donna Eyster, from Canada
	He likes scotch	Clarence Slyter, from England
	The wise guy	Jimmy Eyster, from Canada
	She likes milk	Lucille Hughes, from Sweden
	Tall, dark and accommodating	Eddie Burnette, from France
	The blonde with him	Lynn Miller, from U.S.A.
	He's late	Caro, from Australia
	She's late, too	Marcia Adair, from California
	He's later	Kuma, from Korea
	(b) High finance	"Pennies from Heaven"
	Sung by	Wanda Owen, from Ireland
Scene 2	The Girls Explain	The Frances Allis Dancers
	Libby Summers, Sonja Besant, Lucy Lewin, Iola White, Ilsa Hansen, Ruthanne Megley, Lorraine Kaye, Sandra Genin	
Scene 3	It's Impossible (or is it?)	Mr. Caro
	The girl	Miss Miller
Scene 4	Sleight of foot	Mr. Burnette
Scene 5	The girl with the photographic mind	Donna Eyster
	The man	Mr. Eyster
	He can write	Mr. Caro
Scene 6	(a) Moderne	The Allis Dancers
	(b) The guillotine lifts its ugly head	Mr. Fitzkee
	The gal who loses her head	Miss Adair
	The cut-ups	Messrs. Eyster and Ballantine
Scene 7	Do you believe in ghosts?	Mr. Slyter
Scene 8	Orientale	The Allis Dancers
Scene 9	Korean Konjuring	Mr. Kuma
Scene 10	It's just things like this	Mr. Ballantine
	The helping hand	Mr. Eyster
Scene 11	Murder in a Telephone Booth	
	The king's counsellor	Mr. Fitzkee
	The judge	Mr. Caro
	The girl	Miss Miller
	The suspect	Mr. Burnette
	The tramp	Mr. Eyster
	The policeman	Mr. Slyter

Now relax, but please don't figure it out

INTERMISSION (10 Minutes)

Part Two

Scene 1	(a) Magic Pictures	Miss Miller
	(b) The Allis Dancers	
	(c) Almost shocking!!!	
	The customer	Miss Owens
	The salesman	Mr. Eyster
Scene 2	Just a snack of razor blades	Mr. Fitzkee
Scene 3	The deceitful blonde	Miss Lucille
Scene 4	(a) The Allis Dancers	
	(b) The mad hatters	The Magicians
	(c) A magician's night out	Mr. Slyter
Scene 5	Magnetic music	
	At the vibraharp	Mr. Caro
	With the silver ball	Miss Lucille
Scene 6	Love in the Springtime	Miss Owens and Mr. Burnette
	The past	Donna Eyster
Scene 7	(a) Maybe he'll hang himself	Mr. Fitzkee
	(b) Streamlined action	Miss Adair and Mr. Fitzkee
Scene 8	Who's the greatest magician in the world?	
Scene 9	Rabbits from the hat—and other things.	

Changes in program will be announced, if made

Production staged by Macklin Megley

Additional dance numbers staged by Jimmy Stanton

"A Magician's Night Out" routine by Mr. Slyter

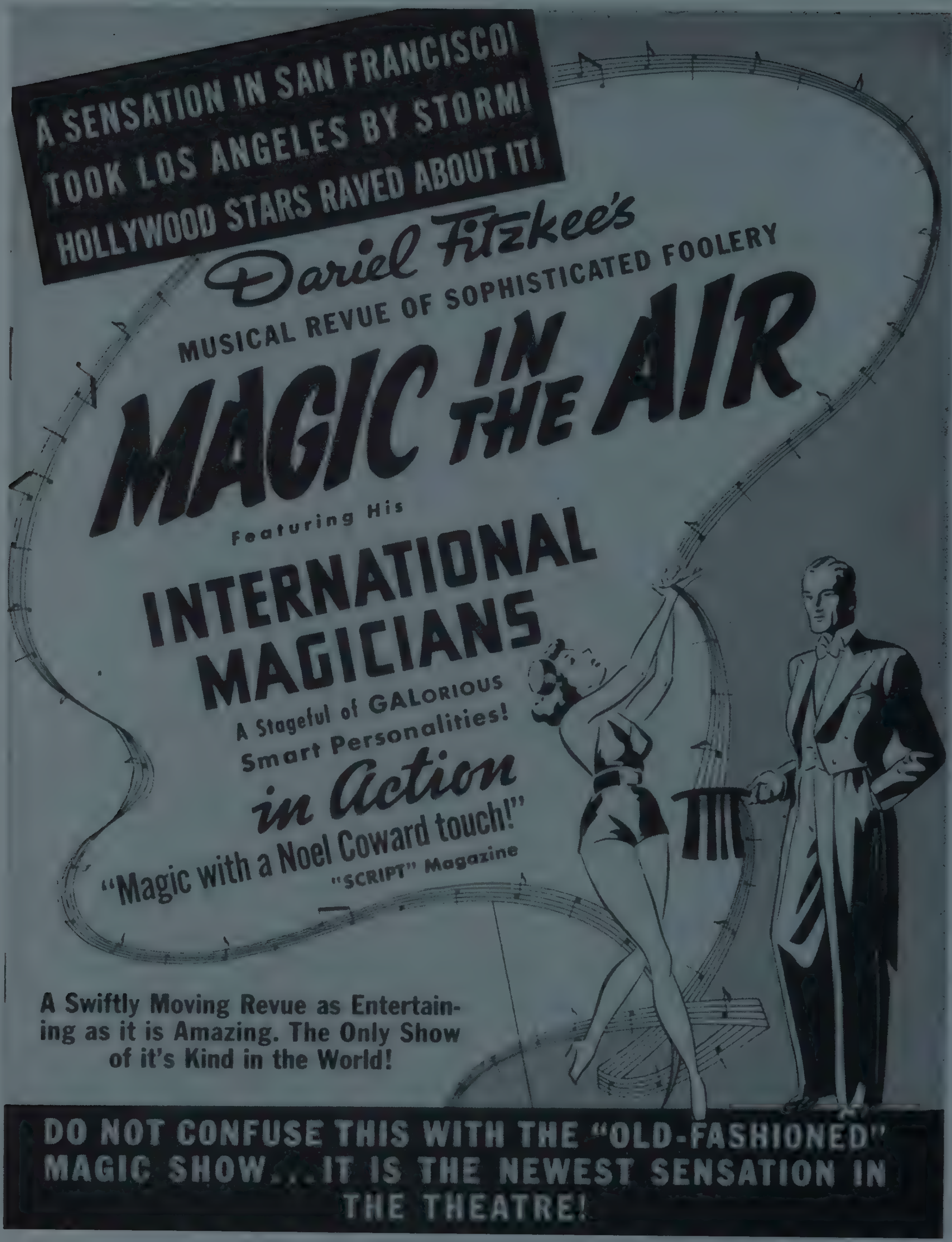
"Pennies from Heaven," "The Mad Hatters," "Magnetic Music," "Almost Shocking," "Singing in the Rain," "Love in the Springtime," and finale routines by Mr. Fitzkee.

"Murder in a Telephone Booth," by Mr. Fitzkee, after an idea suggested by Mr. Charles Waller, of Melbourne, Australia.

"Do You Believe in Ghosts?" routine by permission of Mr. Charles Smith, of Seattle, Wash.

Dialogue in openings of first and second parts by Mr. Herman Ruby, of Hollywood.

Acknowledgments are made for suggestions and assistance by Mr. Bert Kalmar, Hollywood; Mr. Caryl Fleming, Hollywood; Mr. Chester Morris, Hollywood; and Mr. Harry Usher, Hollywood.



A SENSATION IN SAN FRANCISCO!
TOOK LOS ANGELES BY STORM!
HOLLYWOOD STARS RAVED ABOUT IT!

Dariel Fitzkee's
MUSICAL REVUE OF SOPHISTICATED FOOLERY

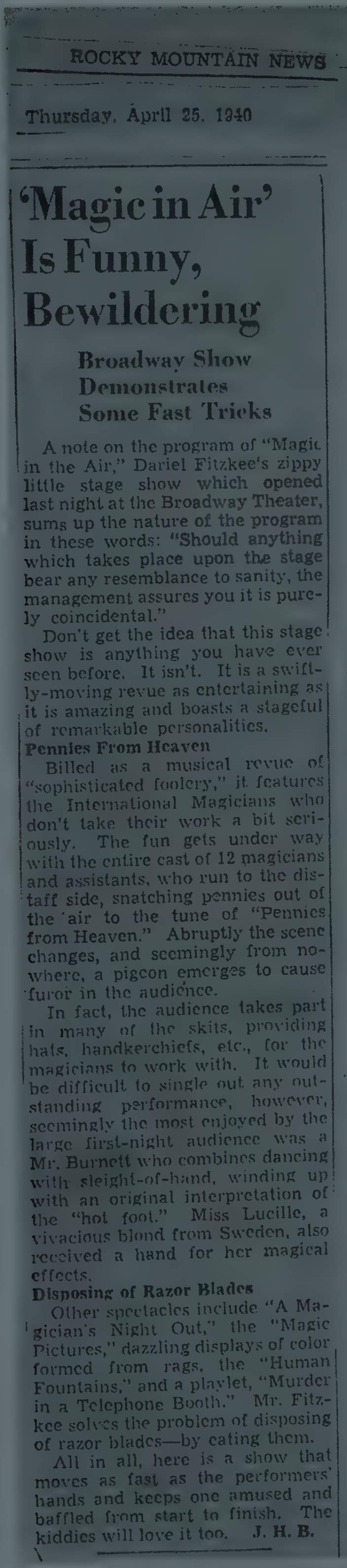
MAGIC IN THE AIR

Featuring His
INTERNATIONAL
MAGICIANS
A Stageful of GALORIOUS
Smart Personalities!
in Action

"Magic with a Noel Coward touch!"
"SCRIPT" Magazine

A Swiftly Moving Revue as Entertaining as it is Amazing. The Only Show of it's Kind in the World!

DO NOT CONFUSE THIS WITH THE "OLD-FASHIONED" MAGIC SHOW... IT IS THE NEWEST SENSATION IN THE THEATRE!



ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

Thursday, April 25, 1940

'Magic in Air' Is Funny, Bewildering

Broadway Show Demonstrates Some Fast Tricks

A note on the program of "Magic in the Air," Dariel Fitzkee's zippy little stage show which opened last night at the Broadway Theater, sums up the nature of the program in these words: "Should anything which takes place upon the stage bear any resemblance to sanity, the management assures you it is purely coincidental."

Don't get the idea that this stage show is anything you have ever seen before. It isn't. It is a swiftly-moving revue as entertaining as it is amazing and boasts a stageful of remarkable personalities.

Pennies From Heaven

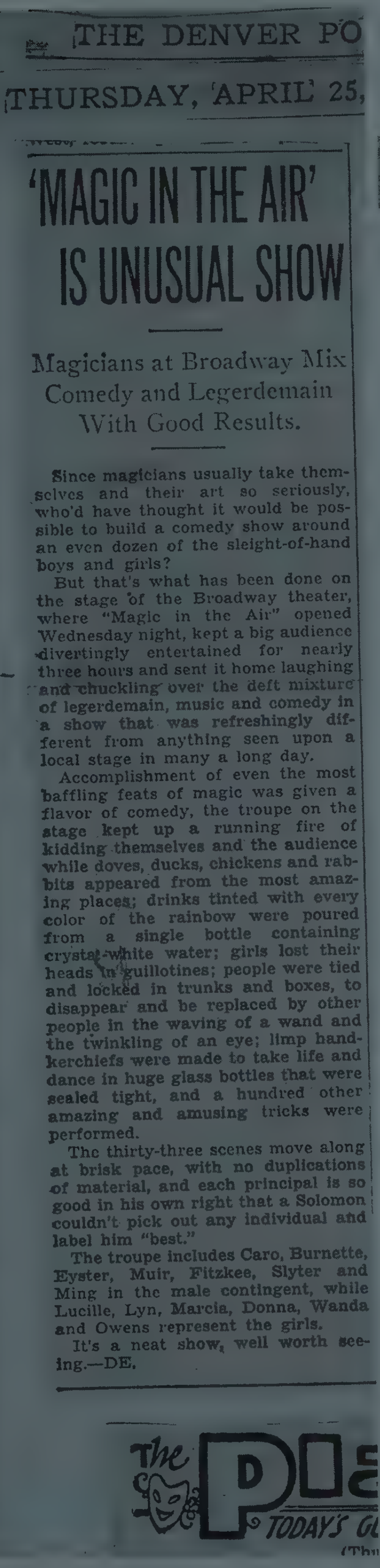
Billed as a musical revue of "sophisticated foolery," it features the International Magicians who don't take their work a bit seriously. The fun gets under way with the entire cast of 12 magicians and assistants, who run to the distaff side, snatching pennies out of the air to the tune of "Pennies from Heaven." Abruptly the scene changes, and seemingly from nowhere, a pigeon emerges to cause furor in the audience.

In fact, the audience takes part in many of the skits, providing hats, handkerchiefs, etc., for the magicians to work with. It would be difficult to single out any outstanding performance, however, seemingly the most enjoyed by the large first-night audience was a Mr. Burnett who combines dancing with sleight-of-hand, winding up with an original interpretation of the "hot foot." Miss Lucille, a vivacious blond from Sweden, also received a hand for her magical effects.

Disposing of Razor Blades

Other spectacles include "A Magician's Night Out," the "Magic Pictures," dazzling displays of color formed from rags, the "Human Fountains," and a playlet, "Murder in a Telephone Booth." Mr. Fitzkee solves the problem of disposing of razor blades—by eating them.

All in all, here is a show that moves as fast as the performers' hands and keeps one amused and baffled from start to finish. The kiddies will love it too. J. H. B.



THE DENVER PO

THURSDAY, APRIL 25,

'MAGIC IN THE AIR' IS UNUSUAL SHOW

Magicians at Broadway Mix Comedy and Legerdemain With Good Results.

Since magicians usually take themselves and their art so seriously, who'd have thought it would be possible to build a comedy show around an even dozen of the sleight-of-hand boys and girls?

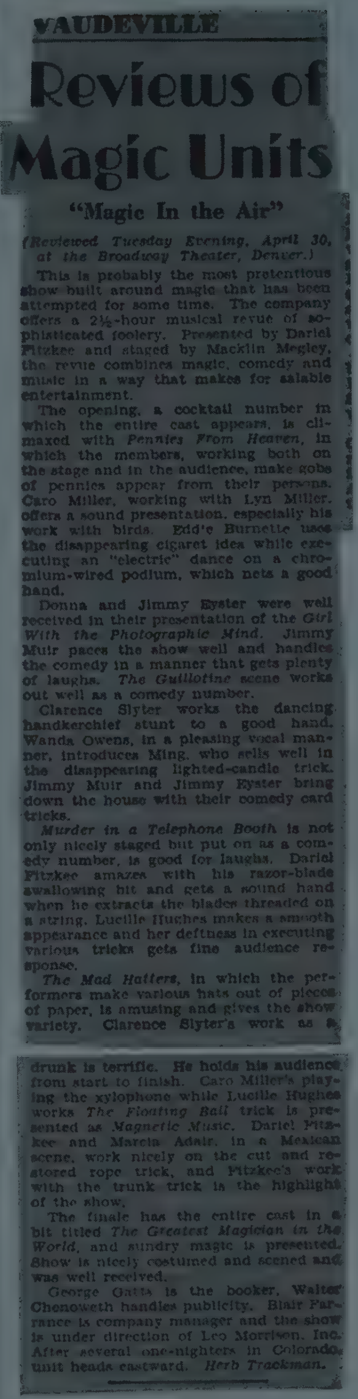
But that's what has been done on the stage of the Broadway theater, where "Magic in the Air" opened Wednesday night, kept a big audience divertingly entertained for nearly three hours and sent it home laughing and chuckling over the deft mixture of legerdemain, music and comedy in a show that was refreshingly different from anything seen upon a local stage in many a long day.

Accomplishment of even the most baffling feats of magic was given a flavor of comedy, the troupe on the stage kept up a running fire of kidding themselves and the audience while doves, ducks, chickens and rabbits appeared from the most amazing places; drinks tinted with every color of the rainbow were poured from a single bottle containing crystal-white water; girls lost their heads in guillotines; people were tied and locked in trunks and boxes, to disappear and be replaced by other people in the waving of a wand and the twinkling of an eye; limp handkerchiefs were made to take life and dance in huge glass bottles that were sealed tight, and a hundred other amazing and amusing tricks were performed.

The thirty-three scenes move along at brisk pace, with no duplications of material, and each principal is so good in his own right that a Solomon couldn't pick out any individual and label him "best."

The troupe includes Caro, Burnette, Eyster, Muir, Fitzkee, Slyter and Ming in the male contingent, while Lucille, Lyn, Marcia, Donna, Wanda and Owens represent the girls.

It's a neat show, well worth seeing.—DE.



VAUDEVILLE

Reviews of Magic Units

"Magic In the Air"

(Reviewed Tuesday Evening, April 30, at the Broadway Theater, Denver.)

This is probably the most pretentious show built around magic that has been attempted for some time. The company offers a 2½-hour musical revue of sophisticated foolery. Presented by Dariel Fitzkee and staged by Macklin Megley, the revue combines magic, comedy and music in a way that makes for salable entertainment.

The opening, a cocktail number in which the entire cast appears, is climaxed with *Pennies From Heaven*, in which the members, working both on the stage and in the audience, make gobs of pennies appear from their persons. Caro Miller, working with Lyn Miller, offers a sound presentation, especially his work with birds. Eddie Burnette uses the disappearing cigaret idea while executing an "electric" dance on a chromium-wired podium, which nets a good hand.

Donna and Jimmy Eyster were well received in their presentation of the *Girl With the Photographic Mind*. Jimmy Muir paces the show well and handles the comedy in a manner that gets plenty of laughs. *The Guillotine* scene works out well as a comedy number.

Clarence Slyter works the dancing handkerchief stunt to a good hand. Wanda Owens, in a pleasing vocal manner, introduces Ming, who sells well in the disappearing lighted-candle trick. Jimmy Muir and Jimmy Eyster bring down the house with their comedy card tricks.

Murder in a Telephone Booth is not only nicely staged but put on as a comedy number, is good for laughs. Dariel Fitzkee amazes with his razor-blade swallowing bit and gets a sound hand when he extracts the blades threaded on a string. Lucille Hughes makes a smooth appearance and her deftness in executing various tricks gets fine audience response.

The Mad Hatters, in which the performers make various hats out of pieces of paper, is amusing and gives the show variety. Clarence Slyter's work as a drunk is terrific. He holds his audience from start to finish. Caro Miller's playing the xylophone while Lucille Hughes works *The Floating Ball* trick is presented as *Magnetic Music*. Dariel Fitzkee and Marcia Adair, in a Mexican scene, work nicely on the cut and restored rope trick, and Fitzkee's work with the trunk trick is the highlight of the show.

The finale has the entire cast in a bit titled *The Greatest Magician in the World*, and sundry magic is presented. Show is nicely costumed and scened and was well received.

George Gatts is the booker. Walter Chenoweth handles publicity. Blair Farrance is company manager and the show is under direction of Leo Morrison, Inc. After several one-nighters in Colorado, unit heads eastward. *Herb Trackman.*

The Detroit Free Press Sunday July 14 1940

Magicians Featured in Musical Foolery

BY LEN G. SHAW

HERMANN THE GREAT, Mme. Adelaide Hermann, who carried on successfully for several years after his death; Kellar, Thurston, all were mighty makers of magic, well-remembered by an older generation of theatergoers, and by many not so ancient who sat under the spell of Howard Thurston from boyhood to the time of his death, and found him a perennial source of wonderment and amusement.

So long as Thurston lived, not only to carry on the old traditions but outdo the feats of his distinguished predecessors, a magic show was an integral part of every theatrical season.

In his later years, it is true, Thurston appeared in picture houses; but he continued to draw the faithful who always flocked to see him. With his demise, four years ago, magic in a big way virtually dropped from view as a major theatrical item. Its occasional presentation since then has been on a comparatively modest scale.

All this is to be changed, we are told, with the arrival at the Cass Sunday night of "Magic in the Air." Dariel Fitzkee is the sponsor of what he describes as "a musical revue of sophisticated foolery," featuring a group of international magicians. Organized on the West Coast, it met with great favor, and is trying its luck in the Midwest, with New York as its eventual destination. It is a full evening of melody and merriment and mystification, including among its principals, in addition to Fitzkee, who designates himself as a Hollywoodian; Maldo, Mexican magician; the Eysters, Canadian telepathists; Ming, a Chinese scorcer; Caor, an Australian; Slyter, who comes from England; Lucille Hughes, Sweden's representative; Tolmack, from Yugoslavia; Lynn, New York; the Great Ballantyne, from everywhere; Marcia, Wanda, California.

If geographical derivation means anything the show should be as miscellaneous as it is claimed to be, and as diverting.

"Magic in the Air"

Presto! It's So Simple

There's necromancy elsewhere as well as in the ether, for witness the manner in which Slyter makes a handful of glasses seem to spring from nowhere while Marcia Adair waves a wand. They are part of the band of international wonder workers opening at the Cass Sunday night.

PRESS—MONDAY, JULY

Theater

Magician's Theme Is Diversification

By Len G. Shaw

"MAGIC IN THE AIR"

Any attempt to catalog what took place at the Cass Theater Sunday night would be almost as difficult as to explain how most of it was done. You will understand, in part, at least, what such a feat would involve when you learn that Dariel Fitzkee brought his international magicians to town for an evening of "Magic in the Air" that stirred rather than satisfied the curiosity of the onlookers, many of whom, it was evident, belonged to the very large class, who in off moments, like to indulge in a bit of necromancy for the amusement and puzzlement of their fellows.

Most of the names on the Fitzkee roster, including that gentleman himself, were unfamiliar to your reporter, who, as the evening progressed, concluded that perhaps he had been overlooking something in recent years.

At any rate, he witnessed a diversified offering that instead of being provided by one magician, as was the old order of events, brought forth a dozen, plus an

octet of dancing damsels, presumably to supply "oriental atmosphere" with their gyrations.

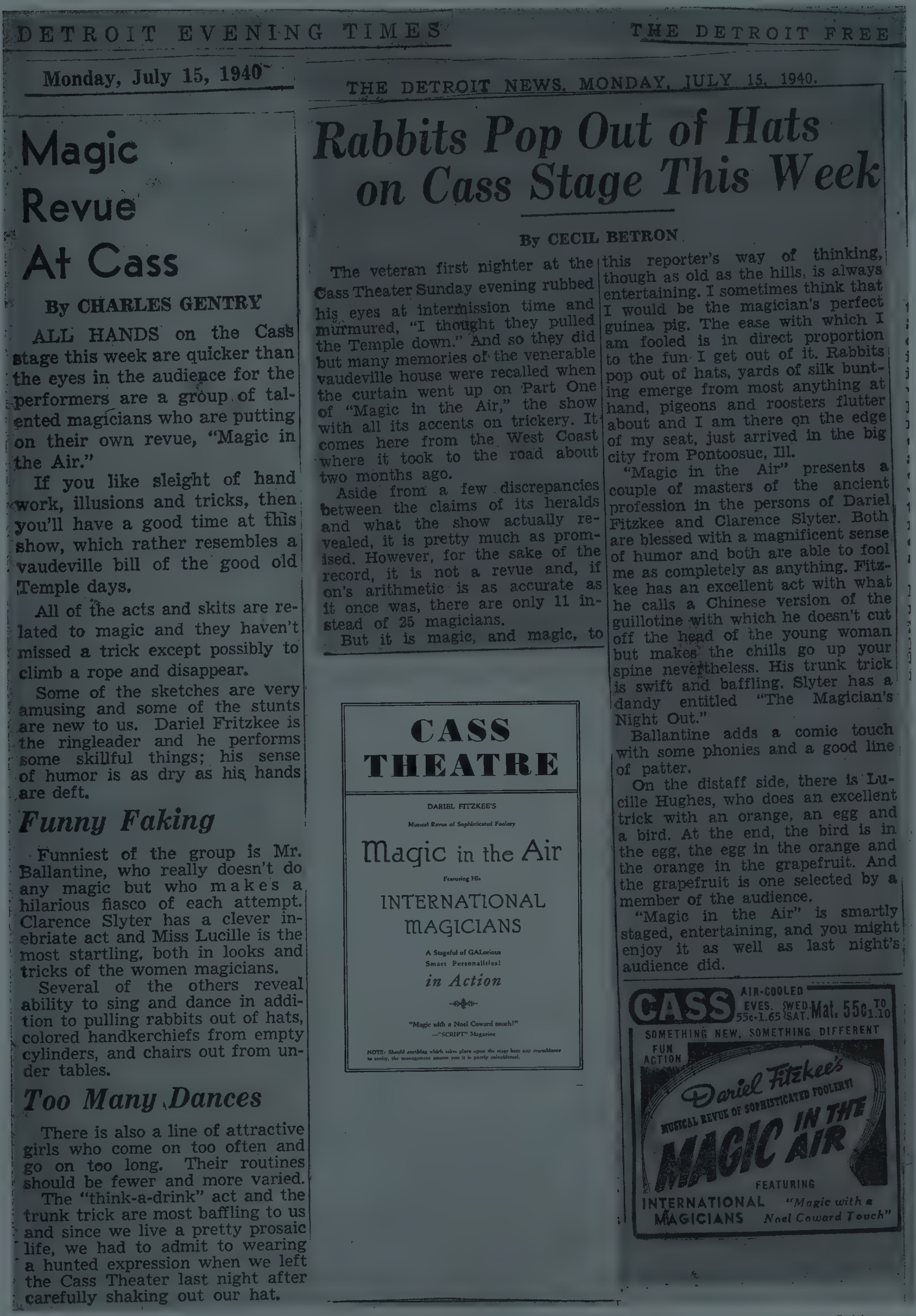
* * *

In spite of the fact that the printed program was scrambled as badly as the musicians down in the pit, in their attempts to keep step with the badly shifted routine, a state of affairs that did not help the sum total, it was possible to sort out some of the wonder workers distinguished by their deftness.

There was a latitudinal and lackadaisical chap named Bellantine who got the most laughs by not completing the tricks he started out to do. Among other things Fitzkee showed how to amuse yourself with discarded razor blades, and conducted a bloodless beheading. A blond lady identified as Lucille Hughes, from Sweden, rated tops with smooth samples of sleight of hand.

* * *

Donna Eyster's photographic mind could not be mixed up, which was in marked contrast to the mental state of the customers before the show was over. Kuma, from Korea, projected some knotty problems, and Caro, from



DETROIT EVENING TIMES

THE DETROIT FREE

Monday, July 15, 1940

Magic Revue At Cass

By CHARLES GENTRY

ALL HANDS on the Cass stage this week are quicker than the eyes in the audience for the performers are a group of talented magicians who are putting on their own revue, "Magic in the Air."

If you like sleight of hand work, illusions and tricks, then you'll have a good time at this show, which rather resembles a vaudeville bill of the good old Temple days.

All of the acts and skits are related to magic and they haven't missed a trick except possibly to climb a rope and disappear.

Some of the sketches are very amusing and some of the stunts are new to us. Dariel Fritzkee is the ringleader and he performs some skillful things; his sense of humor is as dry as his hands are deft.

Funny Faking

Funniest of the group is Mr. Ballantine, who really doesn't do any magic but who makes a hilarious fiasco of each attempt. Clarence Slyter has a clever inebriate act and Miss Lucille is the most startling, both in looks and tricks of the women magicians.

Several of the others reveal ability to sing and dance in addition to pulling rabbits out of hats, colored handkerchiefs from empty cylinders, and chairs out from under tables.

Too Many Dances

There is also a line of attractive girls who come on too often and go on too long. Their routines should be fewer and more varied.

The "think-a-drink" act and the trunk trick are most baffling to us and since we live a pretty prosaic life, we had to admit to wearing a hunted expression when we left the Cass Theater last night after carefully shaking out our hat.

THE DETROIT NEWS, MONDAY, JULY 15, 1940.

Rabbits Pop Out of Hats on Cass Stage This Week

By CECIL BETRON

The veteran first nighter at the Cass Theater Sunday evening rubbed his eyes at intermission time and murmured, "I thought they pulled the Temple down." And so they did but many memories of the venerable vaudeville house were recalled when the curtain went up on Part One of "Magic in the Air," the show with all its accents on trickery. It comes here from the West Coast where it took to the road about two months ago.

Aside from a few discrepancies between the claims of its heralds and what the show actually revealed, it is pretty much as promised. However, for the sake of the record, it is not a revue and, if on's arithmetic is as accurate as it once was, there are only 11 instead of 25 magicians.

But it is magic, and magic, to this reporter's way of thinking, though as old as the hills, is always entertaining. I sometimes think that I would be the magician's perfect guinea pig. The ease with which I am fooled is in direct proportion to the fun I get out of it. Rabbits pop out of hats, yards of silk bunting emerge from most anything at hand, pigeons and roosters flutter about and I am there on the edge of my seat, just arrived in the big city from Pontoosuc, Ill.

"Magic in the Air" presents a couple of masters of the ancient profession in the persons of Dariel Fitzkee and Clarence Slyter. Both are blessed with a magnificent sense of humor and both are able to fool me as completely as anything. Fitzkee has an excellent act with what he calls a Chinese version of the guillotine with which he doesn't cut off the head of the young woman but makes the chills go up your spine nevertheless. His trunk trick is swift and baffling. Slyter has a dandy entitled "The Magician's Night Out."

Ballantine adds a comic touch with some phonies and a good line of patter.

On the distaff side, there is Lucille Hughes, who does an excellent trick with an orange, an egg and a bird. At the end, the bird is in the egg, the egg in the orange and the orange in the grapefruit. And the grapefruit is one selected by a member of the audience.

"Magic in the Air" is smartly staged, entertaining, and you might enjoy it as well as last night's audience did.

CASS
THEATRE

DARIEL FITZKEE'S
Musical Revue of Sophisticated Foolery
Magic in the Air
Featuring His
INTERNATIONAL
MAGICIANS
A Stageful of GALorious
Smart Personalities!
in Action

❖

"Magic with a Noel Coward touch!"
—"SCRIPT" Magazine

NOTE: Should anything which takes place upon the stage bear any resemblance to sanity, the management assures you it is purely coincidental.

CASS AIR-COOLED
EVES. 55c-1.65 WED. SAT. Mat. 55c TO 1.10
SOMETHING NEW, SOMETHING DIFFERENT
FUN
ACTION
Dariel Fitzkee's
MUSICAL REVUE OF SOPHISTICATED FOOLERY!
MAGIC IN THE AIR
FEATURING
INTERNATIONAL MAGICIANS
"Magic with a Noel Coward Touch"

Dariel Fitzkee on Psychic Phenomena

"Read me some more about the ponies!"

(Dariel's "Thoughts are Things" column in *Genii* for January, 1938, was quite remarkable. It is the only occasion we know of where he revealed his interest in psychic phenomena. Although it was mentioned earlier in the text of this book, the full article is worthy of appearing here. – drg)

A young woman wearing a blindfold, pushed about by an unseen force, laboriously formed the letters of the sentence on a large sheet of heavy paper. Across the dining room table sat a man intently watching every movement. The only sound was the sound of the fog horns in the distance wailing at the entrance to the Golden Gate.

There were two other sounds – the scratch of the thick pencil and the slow, heavy breathing of the man.

At the head of the table sat another young woman. Her face was white.

Three others, a woman and two men, sat tensely at the other end of the table.

A few minutes before a message had come through the medium informing the woman at the head of the table that her mother's spirit was present. Her husband, across from the medium, skeptical, had snapped a request for identification.

Then the medium wrote. "Read me some more about the ponies."

The husband looked at his wife in amazement. All doubt had faded.

It was quickly explained. During the mother's last illness she became interested in horse-racing. Every evening the son-in-law would bring home the paper and would read to her the day's results at the tracks while the dying woman would compare the results with the form she was keeping. Then they would read the next day's entries and prepare a chart for the new races. Occasionally they would venture a bet together.

It was almost the last thing she did. Certainly, it would be the most convincing type of identification.

Strange, isn't it? I know, because I was there.

This was not the usual gathering at a mediumistic seance. All of the people here were above fraud. The husband and wife referred to had just come from Chicago for a visit. The identifying incidents took place in Chicago.

The medium was not a professional. In fact, she received nothing whatever in connection with the experiment. I can personally vouch for everyone at that meeting. I know that the medium knew nothing whatever about the horse racing business. She had never met the deceased. The seance was suggested on the spur of the moment and the medium agreed reluctantly to sit.

Magicians have written at great length about the fraudulent mediums they have trapped. They never write about those they do not catch. There is no publicity in that.

Most magicians are of the opinion that ALL mediumistic demonstrations are fraudulent. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I am not saying that ANY of the mediumistic performances are GENUINE manifestations from the so-called spirit world. I am not saying that there are spirits. Or that the dead return.

But I am insisting that mediums all over the world are demonstrating the presence of something – spiritualism or telepathy – call it what you will, repeatedly. Certainly ALL of the results they achieve are not based on methods familiar to even well-posted magicians.

Any open-minded magician who may care to undertake an extended investigation of this so-called spiritualistic phenomena, who witnesses a sufficient number of such performances, embracing the work of a widely scattered field of medium, is going to come away from many of those meetings completely at loss for an explanation for some of the results which he may witness.

I know this to be true. This has been my experience.

Maybe I am a natural sucker. But it has been a long time since a magician has fooled me.

Hereward Carrington has written a book called *The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism.* The first three-quarters of the book is devoted to fraudulent phenomena and an explanation of methods with which well informed magicians are familiar. But the last one-quarter he has labelled, "Genuine."

This man is well acquainted with the secrets available to the ordinary magician. Yet – I now quote from the preface: "I am fully convinced that genuine physical phenomena . . . . occur in a genuine manner . . . I myself have seen such phenomena . . . And today I believe . . . that fully ninety-eight percent of the physical phenomena are fraudulently produced."

The late Sir Conan Doyle possessed one of the most logical minds that ever existed. His character, Sherlock Holmes, is even now regarded as one of the most logical, deductive characters that ever appeared in fiction. Certainly, the logic and deduction came from no other source than Doyle's mind.

For a while I shall quote from Doyle's book, *The Great Revelation*, published by George H. Doran Company:

"When I had finished my medical education in 1882, I found myself, like many young medical men, a convinced materialist as regards our personal destiny. I had never ceased to be an earnest theist, because it seemed to me that Napoleon's question to the atheistic professors on the starry night as he voyaged to Egypt: "Who was it, gentlemen, who made these stars?" has never been answered. To say that the Universe was made by immutable laws only put the question one degree further back as to who made the laws."

You will note Sherlock Holmes' characteristic logic is coming to the surface. He continues:

". . . But when it came to a question of our little personalities surviving death, it seemed to me that the whole analogy of Nature was against it. . . When the body dissolves there is an end of the matter . . . I was convinced that death did indeed end all . . ."

Still Doyle:

"I had always regarded spiritualism as the greatest nonsense on earth, and I had read of the conviction of fraudulent mediums and wondered and wondered how any sane man could believe such things. I met some friends, however, who were interested in the matter, and I sat with them at some table-moving seances. We got connected messages. I am afraid the only result they had on my mind was that I regarded these friends with suspicion. . . . I was puzzled and worried over it, for they were not people whom I could imagine as cheating.

"About this time . . . I came across a book called *The Reminiscences of Judge Edwards.* He was a judge of the U. S. High Courts and a man of high standing. The book gave an account of how his wife had died, and how he had been able for many years to keep in touch with her . . . I read the book with interest, and absolute scepticism. It seemed to me an example of how a hard practical man might have a weak side to his brain, a sort of reaction, as it were, against those plain facts of life with which he had to deal. . . "

Isn't this almost the same thing that has been said against Doyle by many of us enlightened (?) magicians, myself among them? So Doyle was aware of that, too. Is it possible that we today stand where Doyle did BEFORE HE INVESTIGATED IT THOROUGHLY?

Doyle, an educated man, investigated spiritualism thirty years before he definitely decided that there was something to it. All of the things you can think of to refute the few quotations I have made here Doyle mentions in the book I refer to here. It is interesting reading. Study it. Then try to be as sure that an interest in spiritualism is as foolish as you perhaps think now.

But Doyle is not the only great mind to take spiritualistic phenomena seriously. At random I can name several – all great scientists of world wide fame – Sir Oliver Lodge, the great chemist, Crookes; Wallace, a rival of Darwin; Professor Hyslop, former professor of logic at Columbia University; Flammarion, the noted astronomer.

It was Steinmetz who said years before he died: "The great era of scientific discovery will be in the fields of the psychic and spiritual."

Would it not be presumptuous of us to place our own feeble brains above these giants without a thorough investigation?

If past history can be used as a criterion, the supernatural of Today becomes the commonplace of Tomorrow.

I do not say that spiritualism is genuine. Neither do I say it is mere superstitious bunk. Many magicians spend the greater part of their lives trying to discover "the how" of newer and better tricks. I am suggesting a field wherein you may find real magic.

This particular article is being written before the broadcast of the telepathic experiments announced by the Zenith Foundation for Sunday evenings. I shall look forward to these with interest. I honestly think that they will discover something. Tell me if I am wrong.

I have only touched lightly upon the materials at hand on this subject. If more of it would be of interest, let me know.

In closing, I wish to state that I have only the highest respect for the people who have concluded that there is nothing in spiritualism. Yet I also have an equally high respect for the great minds who have come to conclusions directly opposite.

(In 1937, the Zenith Radio Corporation [Zenith radios were popular radios of that era] began a series of nationwide broadcasts about psychic phenomena and began selling special ESP cards for people to test themselves. A month later, Rhine's popular account of the Duke research program, New Frontiers of the Mind, hit the bookstores and became a sensation. By the end of the year, few people in the United States had not heard of ESP or the research at Duke University. As one might expect, the results of the radio broadcasts were inconclusive. — drg)

Dariel Fitzkee's Coin Trick

by Dariel Fitzkee

(This, Dariel's first published trick, appeared in the October, 1930 issue of *The Sphinx*.)

I am inclosing herewith a secret, written in my own original code, which I have refused as high as eighteen thousand dollars for by club performers – I mean the trick – not the code. You can have it for nothing. If the code sticks you, look up some other trick –it will probably be better anyway.

FITZKEE'S SUPER BAFFLING, ASTOUNDING HALF-CROWN AND FOULARD ILLUSION

Merformer orrowbays it gossible reresidering editcra andingsta won pour-gilt miece. Bre raz pit arkedmay and bate noted.

Next bre orosbay two minnen andkerchiefcras. Aw, hell, this gives you an idea of the code, and why ball up a good trick just to become famous!

As I said before, a half-dollar is borrowed, marked and the date noted; also two linen handkerchiefs are borrowed.

One handkerchief is spread out on a table and the coin is placed in the center. It is then folded over in a style somewhat similar to that adopted by the mothers of the world in devising impromptu pants for their untrained infants.

Grasping the coin through the handkerchief, the whole thing is folded over several times, with opposite diagonal corners out.

Pick up the rolled – or folded up – handkerchief with the coin inside and hold it by the two ends – like the coin in the knotted handkerchief.

Orate blatantly about the miracle your are about to perform, and brag considerably about your skill; meanwhile, tie the handkerchief in a knot, apparently trapping the coin in the knot.

What you really do, however, is to slightly tilt the handkerchief which allows the coin to slide down into the hand. Hanging onto the coin, tie the knot and hand the handkerchief to someone to hold by one corner. Then, picking up the other handkerchief, throw the corner over the hand concealing the coin and go into the old coin-in-knot stunt. I will describe that for those who care for further enlightenment.

Hanging onto the opposite diagonal ends of the hank, roll it into a rope by throwing the corners over and over, without releasing the corners held. Then let the coin slip down into the center of the handkerchief. Then tie the handkerchief into a knot around the coin and give it to someone else to hold by a corner.

Without much difficulty the performer can [apparently] proceed to pass the coin from the first handkerchief to the second.

If you like this one I'll send you one worse. But all kidding aside, I have found this very, very effective.

Dr. Ervin's
Borrowed Bill in Cigarette

(Invented 1931 by Dr. E. G. Ervin, Kansas City)

"A TRICK WITHOUT A SINGLE FAULT."

(Instructions written by Dariel Fitzkee. Dariel released this as a single trick in 1937. It was extremely well received. A device was included with the trick which was placed into a cigarette packet that enabled the bill to be loaded into the cigarette. We have never seen that device, but the instructions are very clear and we readers can imagine at least the type of device it must have been. With cigarettes politically incorrect this trick will have little use in the States today. We include it because it is an example of Dariel's ability to recognize a marketable idea when he saw one and to write an excellent set of instructions. – drg)

NOTE: This method of performing this effect is an exclusive invention of Dr. Ervin, one of the world's greatest inventors of subtle magic. In my belief it represents this inventor's ingenuity at its best.

When Dr. Ervin first disclosed the working to me I immediately realized that it is probably the most direct and most practical method ever evolved for performing the borrowed bill in cigarette effect.

Many performances, under all kinds of conditions, have convinced me that for practicability and deceptiveness there is nothing that will approach it. For this reason, while it is easy to perform, I should like to caution you to PRACTICE IT WELL BEFORE ATTEMPTING IT IN PUBLIC. I say this because it is worthy of the best that is in you. Properly performed, its effect on any audience is sensational.

Only a few days ago when I presented it before a group of San Francisco business men, Mr. Adolph Uhl, one of the supervisors of that city and at present a candidate for mayor, whose bill I had borrowed, gasped when he tore the bill from the cigarette. Then he turned to the audience and announced in all seriousness, "This is the greatest trick I have ever seen."

I call this to your attention only to impress upon you the profound effect it has on the audience if carefully presented and sold.

These instructions will reveal to you several routines and variations. All of them are based on Dr. Ervin's own methods. Some of the variations I have contributed. Several routines are suggested to enable you to meet all conditions.

The inclosed device is all that is necessary to accomplish the effect. It has one purpose only. By its use a borrowed marked bill may be introduced INSIDE a cigarette in the mere act of reaching for a package of cigarettes!

Procure a package of cigarettes. Lucky Strikes are particularly suitable and recommended because the cigarettes are wrapped in a more superior paper for the purpose than any other brand. Dr. Ervin recommends the removal of the cellophane wrapper entirely. This writer, however, leaves the cellophane wrapper on.

With a razor blade, slit across both ends of the outer wrapper at the bottom. This will allow the uprights of the accessory frame to be introduced between the outer and inner wrappers. The metal ends go INSIDE the outside wrapper of the package, NOT the cellophane. The ends are beneath both the cellophane and the wrapper so that they are concealed from view.

With the front of the package AWAY from you, push the uprights into the slits. The short tube goes to the right. Mark the position of the tube. Cut a hole in the bottom of the package a bit larger than the diameter of the tube. The hole goes through both wrappers, revealing the bottoms of the cigarettes.

Remove TWO cigarettes above the hole. The tobacco is removed from one of these cigarettes except for about one quarter of an inch at the end. This cigarette paper tube is slipped around the upright end of the tube of the device. Press it down carefully until it is tight around the flared base of the tube. A minute portion of wax – NOT magician's wax – or paraffin at the base of the tube will insure that the empty cigarette will stay "put." This operation is helped by inserting a rolled paper inside the metal tube from the bottom.

The roll of paper should be somewhat stiff. It should be about the same width as a paper bill. When the empty cigarette is in place push the paper roll into it through the hole in the bottom of the device.

Insert the metal uprights into the slits, guiding the faked cigarette into the package until it rests flat against the bottom.

With your thumb over the hole, the package may be seen from any side without revealing anything suspicious.

When the effect is not being performed the paper tube, left in the cigarette, will protect it. To perform, of course, it will be necessary to remove the paper roll. Thus you have a direct opening in the bottom of the package leading right inside of the empty cigarette.

Dr. Ervin places the package upside down in his left vest pocket. The hole is at the front. This writer prefers to stand the package upside down in his right coat pocket, tube towards the front, package lying against the body. A silk handkerchief holds it in place. There is no reason why it should not be put into the trousers pocket. Put it wherever it is convenient for you.

Routine

The bill is borrowed. But before the performer touches it the number is taken down by two or three spectators and another signs it. Tear off a corner if you wish.

Most experienced performers will know this. But it will help many so I insert it here: If you wish to feature this trick, slow down your tempo for it. Impress the fact that you are using ANY bill. Take a little time to SELL these features.

This retarding of tempo MUST NOT be done with every effect. It can only be done ONCE during a performance to FEATURE one trick only. Done once you get emphasis. Done constantly you get – sleep.

When the performer receives the bill he folds it in half the short way. Then he ROLLS the bill starting with the two ENDS first. It is rolled as compactly as possible, ending with the folded edge OUTSIDE. This means that the center of the bill will be on the outside when rolled. The length of the roll will be that of the width of the bill.

Now with the edge of the center of the bill towards you, hold one end tightly. Fold about one-quarter of an inch of the opposite end AWAY FROM YOU. Press it tightly against the roll. This is essential as it prevents the bill from unrolling.

Any method you may prefer may be used to vanish the bill. The only essential is that it must leave you with the bill in the hand most convenient for reaching for the package of cigarettes. IN THE ACT OF REACHING FOR THE PACKAGE THE ROLLED BILL IS INSERTED INTO THE CIGARETTE THROUGH THE HOLE IN THE BOTTOM OF THE ERVIN DEVICE.

It is pushed down until the fold is reached. This is bent upright quickly and the rolled bill is pushed in the rest of the way.

But in the same movement the package is brought forth.

Open the package by tearing away the corners nearest the tube, Tear down the sides a short distance to make things easier. Pull out the two corner cigarettes and hand them to nearby spectators. Take the faked one WHICH WILL LOOK IDENTICAL TO THE OTHERS.

IN TAKING OUT THE FAKED CIGARETTE, GRASP IT BELOW THE TOBACCO PORTION, GRIPPING THE BILL ITSELF. A short length of the bill will extend beyond the end of the cigarette. This is easily covered with the fingers.

Insert the cigarette into the mouth, bill end towards you – deep enough to cover the bill with the lips.

Then light the cigarettes given to the spectators. Try to light the faked one. Take it from your mouth. Be careful to keep the bill end covered with the fingers. Tear the cigarette in the center. Be careful to show everything clearly. You may have the owner of the bill right at your elbow if you wish.

BUT BE CAREFUL NOT TO MAKE ANY MOVE WHICH WILL SPOIL THE EFFECT. DO NOT COVER THE CIGARETTE ANY MORE THAN NECESSARY. Magicians frequently make unnecessary movements or accidental – even intentional – gestures which ruin otherwise effective tricks.

The Bill Vanish
The vanish from beneath the handkerchief.

Get a piece of paper the same size as the bill and roll it the same as you roll the bill. Sew it into the hem of the handkerchief.

Hold the handkerchief in the left hand with the faked roll on the side nearest you. Apparently place the bill beneath the handkerchief, taking it, held through the cloth, in the fingers of the opposite hand. Actually the faked roll is grasped and caught through the center of the handkerchief. The real bill is retained in the right.

The spectator is directed to take "the bill" through the handkerchief. Covered, he holds it up in view of the audience.

Reach into the pocket for the cigarette package. Insert the bill, straighten it and bring forth the package. From here go as directed previously.

Before lighting the cigarettes cause the bill to "vanish" by pulling the handkerchief from the spectator's hands. Then "light up" and finally discover the bill.

An Alternate Vanish

This writer prefers to use the envelope vanish. Burning the spectator's bill is always certain to produce comedy and for that reason alone, coupled with the constant possibility that a misguided assistant may take a peek at the bill, I have used this method.

An ordinary envelope is shown. As he asks for a bill, the performer, right thumb inside of the envelope, cuts and pushes his thumb through the face of the envelope. Keeping the face side away from the audience, the performer, not looking at the envelope, closes it flat and puts it down.

Then he rolls the bill as directed. After it is rolled, the bill is taken in the LEFT hand while the envelope is held at the bottom edge, flap side towards audience, with the right. The left lifts up the flap and clearly pushes the rolled bill into the envelope.

But the inside end goes through the hole and into the right fingers. The bill is left partly in the envelope, the end visible to the audience above the edge of the flap, until the flap is sealed down.

No movement of the right should be necessary. If the fingers of the right are placed correctly the rolled bill will go into the depression between the second and third fingers which are held close together. The other fingers are extended away from these.

The left takes the envelope at the top. Simultaneously the right drops and turns, bringing the bill towards the performer's body. The left holds the envelope for a moment. Then the right takes the envelope upright between the closed second and third fingers and the thumb. The bill is still behind the fingers. The left takes the envelope and the right goes to the pocket with the bill.

At this juncture, Dr. Ervin loads the cigarette and brings forth the package. This writer, having previously placed a box of matches in his side coat pocket with the package, reaches into the pocket for the matches. The accompanying remark is : "Has anybody a match? Never mind."

The cigarette is loaded and the matches are brought forth. The envelope is burned and apparently so is the bill. Then the package is produced.

In burning the envelope be careful to hold it so that the light will not show through. Some performers twist the envelope before burning it. This is probably safer. To do this: After the envelope has been sealed, fold it once, lengthwise, towards the face to conceal the hole. Be careful to keep the bill concealed.

Holding one end with the right, knuckles toward spectators, twist it over forward with the left. Then go into the pocket for the matches, loading the cigarette. Reach into the pocket again for the package of cigarettes. Pass out the cigarettes. Then light the envelope with the match, asking the spectators how they would like to light their smokes with a bill.

The rest you know.

Sleight-of-hand Vanish

Should a manipulative vanish be preferred, Dr. Ervin suggests an adaptation of a quite familiar cigarette sleight:

Nip the folded end of the bill between the first and second fingers of the right hand. Show the left empty and place or poke the bill out of sight – in the closed left fist. Hesitatingly, show that it is really there.

Then repeat the move. This time the left fist is partially open. Instead of placing the bill in that fist, the rolled end – close to the right fingers – is pressed against the curve of the left first finger which levers the bill into a finger palm in the right hand.

Rub the left to nothingness and reach apparently for the vanished bill. But bring out the package of cigarettes instead.

This is my preference to the burned bill or the feked handkerchief.

Preparing the Cigarette

At first this will seem like a difficult undertaking. But a little experience makes it quite simple. This writer prepares several at a time, inserting in each a roll of paper to protect it.

If the cigarettes to be used are dry the operation will be easier. With a pair of slender tweezers take as much of the tobacco from the end as possible. Then roll the cigarette between the palms, keeping a firm pressure.

Firmly pack the end of the cigarette in which you wish to retain the quarter inch of tobacco. Pushing the paper over the edge of the end will help.

Then about a quarter of an inch below the end roll the cigarette between the two fore-fingers. Use some pressure. This starts the tobacco separating at this point.

The combination of repeated rolling at the end between the first fingers, with rolling between the palms plus help from the tweezers, will do the work.

After emptying the cigarette, the rolled insert will help you to pack the tobacco at the end. Hold the forefinger over the end when tamping.

The City Desk Trick

by Dariel Fitzkee and Doug Kelley

(This routine appeared in the June, 1938 issue of *Genii* magazine under "My Favorite Tricks," a short-lived feature by the *Genii* editor, Bill Larsen. It is credited to both Dariel and his protégé, Doug Kelley. – drg)

The magician hands a spectator a folded piece of paper which, he says, bears a prediction. The spectator then chooses a letter, a number, and a simple geometrical design. The paper is unfolded and the performer's prediction proves correct.

All that is required is a pencil and two pieces of note paper. On one write the letter C. the number 7 and draw a triangle. This paper, folded, is the prediction which is given to the spectator for safe keeping. Now, on the remaining paper, and in view of the audience, write in a row across the top A B C D E F. Hand the spectator a pencil and have him encircle any letter. Usually he will encircle C. If he doesn't have him circle another letter; then another. Then by crossing out circled letters finally, by elimination after the fashion (of the old "your right my left" force the C. Next have the spectator think of a number between one and ten and write it down. Usually it will be 7. If some other number is selected, repeat as in case of the letters. Then have one circled and keep on until all but seven is eliminated. Finally have him draw a "simple geometrical design." Stress the words "simple" and "geometrical" and the spectator will usually draw a triangle. If he doesn't, keep on until he does. Then have him circle one or more until all but the triangle is eliminated. Thus he has "chosen" C, 7, and a triangle.

If the spectator reacts as nine-tenths of the people do, the trick is a sensation. Naturally, the farther the elimination has to go, the less effective is the trick. I have had as many as seven numbers written before I got a 7. Then four numbers circled before there was a circle about the 7. Then I had three numbers crossed out with an X before the 7 was crossed out. Finally, again circled, the 7 was chosen. Even then it was a good trick. If you don't believe it, try it.

The Diminishing Cards

Chris Charlton, Dariel Fitzkee and Others

In Dariel's second *Genii* column, "Glimpses of Strange Shadows," which ran from September, 1938 to August, 1939, he described several routines, often without teaching the complete methods he used. However, the routines are well worth studying, as the methods, if not self-evident, can be found elsewhere. In this first routine, the Diminishing Cards, which appeared in the September, 1938 *Genii*, Dariel explains that he uses the Stanyon version of the gimmicked cards. Any good set of diminishing cards can be used. If you are not familiar with the effect, suffice it to say that with the use of gimmicked cards you apparently cause regulation-size playing cards to shrink in size in stages until they finally disappear. If you are familiar with the effect, the routine will make complete sense to you. If not, you will still get the general idea of the effect and will be able to appreciate Dariel's routine.)

The tricks we buy from the dealers are merely tools. The magician who gathers up a collection of them and scatters them about the stage, with little attention to routine, is a very poor magician. He is putting the tool with which he works ahead of the performance. Almost anyone can exhibit tricks. But not everybody can perform them.

I have a request from a reader in Georgia, asking for information on routining The Diminishing Cards. It will serve as an example of how tricks are routined.

I use the Stanyon Diminishing Cards. The complete set is only a little more than an eighth of an inch in thickness. All I received from Mr. Stanyon was the trick pack and a full pack to match. The problem was to make it interesting to my audiences.

Many performers have used the diminishing cards in combination with the cards to the pocket. They use the diminishing cards as a follow-up "explanation" of the previous trick.

Chris Charlton has a swell routine. So I started with that.

I took a few cards from the regular pack and replaced them with the thin diminishing packet. I discovered that if I put the diminishing packet on top a single overhand shuffle would bring it to the bottom, leaving the top free for counting off the cards for the cards to the pocket.

The idea behind the repeat version, using the diminishing cards, is that you show the audience how the cards are squeezed smaller and smaller until they ultimately vanish and re-appear in the pocket.

When you reach the smallest packet in the Stanyon version you have three cards left. These three ultimately disappear. Obviously they should reappear in the pocket. I use the right pocket for the cards to the pocket, so I put three full-sized cards in my LEFT pocket. I am referring to trousers pockets. I put them in the left pocket so that they would not interfere with the cards to the pocket routine.

The performer explains that as soon as the cards vanish from his hands they reappear in the pocket and EXPAND to full size. It occurred to me that I might get a laugh if I made them increase to jumbo size as a surprise finish. So, I stick three jumbo cards in my inside coat pocket. I plan to take the three cards which I have planted in my left pocket and use them for the blow-off. I will put them in my right trousers pocket, perform the "top of the pocket dodge," and pull the pocket out showing it empty. I will "reproduce" them from the coat pocket greatly enlarged.

The Stanyon trick has five different size packets. A sample card of each size is taken from each packet and displayed as a sample. I had a small wooden easel made just large enough to display one of each size. I had it lacquered in a color furnishing a STRONG CONTRAST to the samples. It is essential that the samples are easily seen. Strong contrast helps.

It is necessary to steal off three packets. They are stolen one at a time after the first three reductions.

After thinking things over carefully, I decided to steal the first packet while comparing the first reduction with the original size. I use a different card than the sample I put on the easel. So the first packet comes off behind the full-sized card.

I like to be routined so that I may work entirely surrounded. So I put this first card in my upper breast pocket, leaving it partly in sight. But the packet goes down into the pocket out of sight.

I slip packet number two off with a one-hand movement while holding the "pack" in the right hand while showing the back of the sample card with the left. I transfer the packet that is to fold to my left, meanwhile reaching into my right coat pocket for my cigarette lighter. Of course, I leave the previous packet in my pocket.

The lighter is held up beside the packet and the two are compared in size. I place the lighter down in full view. There is no need to put it in the pocket at this time and repeated dips into the pocket are inadvisable.

After the next fold, I repeat the one-hand slip-off, retaining the palmed off packet in finger palm as I reach for the lighter for another comparison. After the comparison I dump the lighter – and the palmed packet – into the right coat pocket.

This brings me to the final size. After it vanishes I am to reproduce the three full-sized cards from my left trousers pocket. That is a good excuse to get rid of the smallest packet. So I must make my vanish in such a manner as to leave the pack in my left hand.

A French Drop, retaining the packet in my left, while apparently taking it away in my right, serves admirably. The left hand goes to the left trousers pocket, drops the tiny packet and brings out the three full-sized cards.

They are transferred to my right hand. The right plunges into the right trousers pocket, slips them up to the top of the pocket, and comes out with the pocket itself. I pull open my coat and draw forth the jumbos with the left hand.

My audiences like it. So I leave it that way.

The above is my routine. If you will consider it closely you will see that every move has been carefully planned. You will also notice that there is additional business added here and there to build up the trick. This business is not actually part of the trick

But it is part of the routine.

You will note that I have searched for good logical reasons to cover weak moments. You will note in connection with the business with the lighter that I have carefully avoided the repetition of two similar moves to get rid of loads. Rather, I unloaded one pack before making the comparison in size and the other after. Keeping the lighter in sight eliminated the necessity of too much pocket work.

Part of the routine is the patter. That is the part I am unable to help you with. What would be natural for me to say would not fit you at all.

Besides, if you do it exactly as I do it, you won't be any better than I am. Personally, I don't think that is good enough.

Splat!

by Dariel Fitzkee

(In this intriguing color-change routine from Dariel's column in the December, 1938 *Genii*, the number of changes that occur will leave your audience a bit breathless but delighted. You will need reasonable card handling skills to perform it, but if you develop those you will, indeed, be able to entertain your audience. Where do you get the cards? You have to make them up yourself. With the current state of computer software this is not as difficult as it used to be.)

Both singing and dancing are popular forms of entertaining. They are popular because they permit the spectator to relax and listen or watch. He doesn't give a hoot HOW Alice Faye manages to hit the notes with her low, soft tones. He just likes to hear her sing the kind of songs she sings.

When that spectator watches Bill Robinson or Eleanor Powell dance he doesn't care HOW they manage to get in all of those taps and rhythms. He just likes to sit and watch.

And all of these outstanding performers concentrate on an ENTIRELY DIFFERENT thing than most magicians. They concentrate on SELLING their material, not preventing an analysis of it.

So I present the following trick as entertainment, not mystery. It is based on a gag first suggested, I think, by Wright and Larsen. You have paid a dollar or so for a whole lot worse. I call it "Splat!"

The performer has a deck of cards in his hands. He passes his hand over the deck and a Jack of Spades changes to a Five of Diamonds.

He says: "I call this a color change. If it works, the card changes color. If it doesn't, I change color. No matter what I call it you will understand just as much as I do about it. Take this Five, for example."

He rubs the center spot. It vanishes.

"The center spot changes from red to white. When it's white you can't see it, so you say it's gone.

"I can show you how it works half way."

He makes a quick touch at one of the pips at the outer corner. It turns pink. The card still has its "5" index but it only has three red pips and one pink one.

"Like beating your wife, this isn't as easy as it looks."

He touches the index. It vanishes.

"This wouldn't get by in some poker games."

He touches the pink pip. It is gone.

"But that's easily fixed. You can move this pip over between the other two."

The corner pip is pushed over between the two pips at the side. They are in a row, like a trey, except they are at one side.

"Now if you shove the three pips over in the middle...

He looks at the indexless trey... And stamp a three in the corner, you have it."

He shows the trey.

"But I said this trick is a color change. So far you've seen only one color. It is all a matter of direction. If I rub it the other way, see what we get..."

The trey has green index and pips.

The magician says: "Lavender."

He rubs it again. The card is green now, with the pips white. He gives the pack a healthy slap. When he takes his hand away the card is splattered with gobs of many colors – red, green, yellow, blue.

The magician gazes at it ruefully. "Something must have busted."

What You Need To Know

There are eleven cards used. You need 3 Fives of Diamonds, 2 fours, 3 treys, and 2 special cards.

One five is untouched. Erase the center pip from another. You erase the center pip completely and another partially on the third Five.

From one four partially erase the pip corresponding to the pink one on the five and the index. Erase entirely the pip which was pink and the index from another.

From the seven, erase the index, the center pip and one row of pips, leaving only a row at one side.

Erase the index from the trey. The other trey is used as is.

The pips and index of the last trey are erased until they show faintly, then they are carefully repainted in bright green.

Make a fake trey with green background and white pips.

Take any card and "splat" three or four colors on it. Do this in such a way that it will look like you had a gob of wet color on the card and when you slapped it the color flew in all directions.

The rest of the secret is that these cards are stacked in proper order and loaded onto the back of your pack. The rest is merely utilizing color change moves.

MAKING 'EM LIKE IT

(This lovely version of an old classic, "You Do as I DO" is easy of method. Dariel's presentation in the January, 1939 *Genii*, is a great example of "making 'em like it"!)

Do not take any more time with a trick than is absolutely necessary. But take all of the time you NEED to sell it to the customers. If you don't SELL your magic, you are wasting your time.

Now comes a trick you can sell. I think it is original. Whether or not it is does not matter. It is the kind of a trick I can sell to my audiences.

"LOUIE, THE DIP."

by Dariel Fitzkee

Two packs of cards are shuffled – one by the spectator and the other by the magician. The spectator puts his pack in the performer's inside coat pocket. But the performer, in trying to put his pack in the spectator's pocket, meets with difficulty because of the peculiar things the spectator is carrying in the inside pocket of his coat. Having cleared the pocket, the performer deposits his deck in his spectator's pocket. [The performer loads miscellaneous humorous items as he does this. He might need to leave them with the spectator when finished, so he should be sure that he can afford to give away what he uses here!]

So now comes a demonstration of expert pocket picking. Showing how a magician pick pocket would work, the performer and spectator quickly touch their finger tips together and reach into each other's pocket and pull out a card. They reach simultaneously. But the cards brought forth are different.

The performer explains that this is how the trick would look with ordinary pick pockets working. But a pair of magically trained rascals would get different results.

So the performer asks his spectator if he feels that he had had sufficient training. He may even let the spectator set the number of trials he believes necessary before he may be considered expert.

Immediately after the required number, selected by the spectator, the two dips pluck from each other's pockets identical cards.

It is a crook's version of You Do As I Do... No cracks from you lugs.

In the begining you swipe a card from one deck. This card goes into the performer's pocket, back outwards. The deck from which it is extracted is to go to the spectator.

The duplicate of the pocketed card is maneuvered to the bottom of the other deck. This deck the performer shuffles. He chooses to shuffle this one because he wants to keep the duplicate card at the bottom.

So the two decks are shuffled – the spectator's genuinely by himself, and the performer's by that personage, carefully retaining the location of the duplicate card on the bottom.

The two decks go into the respective pockets of the opposite individuals, backs out.

But the spectator's pack goes into the performer's pocket ABOVE, or outside, the stolen duplicate. The card is against the performer's body. The back of the deck, or the top – as you may choose to call it – is away from the performer.

So now, after the pattern of the well known old trick, the performer and his spectator assistant may touch fingers and pluck cards from each other's pockets to heart's content without duplicates showing, except the remote mathematical possibility of chance.

You will remember that the spectator, cautioned to be fast and to take the card without delay, will invariably take his card from the top of the deck. There is no need during the trials for the magician to do otherwise.

At length, after two or three tries, or after the number chosen by the spectator, the performer, in adjusting the cards in his pocket, slips the duplicate from the bottom to the top, or to the outside. The next time the spectator plucks he will get the duplicate.

The performer gets the corresponding card from the spectator's pocket by taking the bottom card, or the one nearest the spectator's body.

You may conclude after reading this that the trick is lousy. You will probably be right. But my audiences like it. That makes it okay with me.

The Ball and Tube

by Dariel Fitzkee

(Dariel used the old ball and tube trick in his "Glimpses of Strange Shadows" column in the February, 1939 *Genii* to show how a proper routine leads the spectator away from method. – drg)

This routine is my own, but is based largely upon a routine evolved by Rollin Hamblin. Perhaps my routine is exactly the routine he uses. If so, I deserve no credit.

The trick I shall use is the old *Atlas Ball and Tube*.

You are aware that the properties consist, from the audience's viewpoint, of only two items: a shining metal ball about one-half inch in diameter and a brass tube about an inch long, just too small to allow the ball to fall within it.

Secretly, the tube is double. The inner tube is too small for the ball. But the outer tube will allow the ball to fall within.

You do the trick by putting the ball on top of the double tube. The third finger supports the inside tube. By lowering the finger supporting it, the inside tube falls slowly and the ball apparently shrinks sufficiently to slide down inside of the tube. Of course, the inner tube, extending from below the outer one is concealed from view. Later you push the inner tube up, steal off the outer tube and offer the tube (actually the inner one) and the ball for examination.

I don't like this examination business normally. But with this trick it is fundamental.

So... to routine it:

The tough job is to steal the outer tube at the finale. We conclude to steal it under the guise of "stroking" the tube. It would be murder to "stroke" it just once at the time of the stealing, so we decide to use a stroking motion throughout the presentation.

But it is advisable to steal the tube clipped between the base of the thumb and the base of the forefinger. We can't stroke at the crotch of the thumb and forefinger just at the time of the actual stealing, so we decide that every stroking motion will be made with the crotch of the thumb in contact with the tube.

Now that we have stolen the tube we must get rid of it. But how? Various ways present themselves but the best seems to be to dump it into a pocket. Shall we do it openly or surreptitiously? (Bill has raised my rates, so I can use bigger words.)

It is always best to do a thing openly if you can disguise it sufficiently to mislead the audience into thinking you are doing something else. What excuse can you find for going into the pocket? To get something, of course. What do you get from a pocket? Well, a coin might do.

What can you use the coin for? You can hold it up to the spectator and say, as you hand the remaining tube and ball to the spectator, "This liberal fifty-cent reward will be paid to you, if you can get the ball into the tube without squeezing the ball smaller or stretching the tube."

Grab the ball and tube back as soon as possible because some guys will do anything for the four-bits. But you have gotten rid of the outside tube.

Now to put it together:

Put a half-dollar in the right trousers pocket. Come forward with the tube in the left hand and ball in the right. Show that the ball will not enter the tube. Call attention to the highlight on the gleaming metal ball. It is like a crystal, and like a crystal it may be used for concentrating. With proper concentration of the subject one can be hypnotized into believing almost anything.

Explain that you will make a few passes over the ball to assist in the hypnosis. Suggest that the subject might almost believe that the ball was getting smaller, if you were to so suggest it. But explain that you haven't suggested it. (The ball has sunk within the tube and has risen again.)

This time, the second time, you will suggest that the ball is getting smaller. (Meanwhile you are constantly and ceaselessly making an upward pass, from the bottom of the tube upward, as decided.) Repeat the suggestion, still making the passes. (The ball sinks.) Suggest that it is rising again. (Still passing, push it back up.) Let it get clear up. Make two or three more passes. (Then steal off the outer tube and go to the pocket for the money.)

With the left hand extend the tube and ball to the nearest customer. Show him the half-dollar. Say, "This liberal fifty-cent reward will be paid to you, if you can get the ball inside the tube without squeezing the ball smaller or stretching the tube."

A Routine for the Nixon Checker Cabinet

by Dariel Fitzkee

(The theme of Dariel's March, 1939 column is the premise that magic performed with apparatus THAT LOOKS LIKE APPARATUS will not really fool anyone – "It's all in the box!" The key, then, is to give the apparatus a reason for being. "The principles of routining," Dariel wrote, "remain the same regardless of the trick [and regardless of the apparatus used]."

I have selected the trick Thayer lists as "The Haunted Temple of Quong Hi," more commonly known as the Nixon Checker Cabinet, a variation of a caddy trick explained in one of the Hoffman books

The only difference between my cabinet and the one more commonly seen is that in building it myself I used a roller blind placed a few inches behind the doors in order to permit my hand to enter the cabinet. Also, my hollow stack of checkers is made up of INDIVIDUAL checkers instead of the usual tube to represent the lower several.

Briefly, the mechanics of the trick follow: The cabinet has three doors. Each door opens into a separate section of the box. There is an auxiliary sliding section inside which corresponds in size to two compartments. If the sliding double compartment is positioned at the right and the stack of checkers is placed in what is apparently the center compartment of the cabinet, this stack may be moved to the left compartment of the cabinet, leaving the center one empty, merely by sliding the double section to the left.

Needed besides the cabinet is a stack of solid wooden checkers. I use eleven. And a duplicate stack similar in number and color to the first. Two duplicate glass jars of water are also necessary. The second stack of checkers is hollow from the bottom up a sufficient distance to accommodate one of the jars. Solid checkers are placed on top to bring the stacks equal. Each stack of checkers is placed on a wooden square to facilitate handling. An ornamental cylinder, tightly fitting the hollow stack and covered at the top, completes the equipment.

To set up the trick: The sliding compartment is moved to the left so that the left section becomes the left compartment of the cabinet and the right section becomes the center compartment. In the left section is placed the hollow stack with the jar of water inside. In the right section, the center of the cabinet, is placed the solid stack of checkers. The blind is pulled down so that with all doors open only the solid stack shows through the center door.

The other jar of water and the cylindrical cover are placed on nearby tables.

This routine always gets exceptional response from my audiences. Why? I haven't discovered as yet. However, I have never used it for anything but family audiences as it is perfect for this sort of a show.

The Routine

I don't suppose any of you ever heard of Quong Hi. He was a wealthy Chinese philanthropist who caused to be built a magnificent treasure house to protect his wealth.

(Open the three doors, one at a time.) The treasure house had three apartments. (Open the right door.) One was for Wang Foo, China's greatest warrior, who guarded the treasure night and day. (Open the left door.) Another was for Taio Li, China's most sagacious detective.

The center apartment was for Quong Hi's treasure (open the center door) which consisted of eleven distinct fortunes – each representing one month of the year during which Quong Hi spent doing good deeds for his fellow man. (As you say "eleven" take out the solid checkers and show them. As you put them back, squaring them up, you say), You will note that one month is missing. This represents the one month during the year in which Quong Hi retired from the world and spent his time in meditation and burning joss papers to the memory of his ancestors. (Close all doors and release the blind.)

Each morning it was customary for Wang Foo and Taio Li (open the right door and walk around to the back and remove the back of the cabinet during the following) to open the back door and make a thorough search through the treasure house... (the spectators can see through the right compartment. Close the right door, slide the double section over to the right while talking and open the center door. The hollow stack is now visible and the solid stack is behind the right door) ...lest some interloper had concealed himself within. The search completed, the doors were once more closed. (The back is replaced, all doors are closed and the blind is pulled down, concealing the two side openings.) But, whether closed or open you may be certain that Wang Foo and Taio Li were on guard.

Naturally eventually evil persons heard of this treasure and to get it enlisted the services of an evil old Wizard who lived far out in the Gobi desert. The sorcerer caused a spell to be cast before the eyes of Wang Foo and Taio Li, so that to them temporarily all life was suspended. (Open both the right and left doors.)

Then the bandits broke open the door of the treasure chamber and removed Quong Hi's wealth, taking it to a place they had prepared for it in the mountains. (Take out the hollow stack, picking it up with the square upon which it is placed, and carry it to another table. Put the cylindrical cover over it and engage the catch so that the checkers will be carried away when the cover is later picked up, thus revealing the jar of water.

Now the most despised thing in all China was water, because it was plentiful and therefore of little value. So as a gesture of defiance to Quong Hi and to show their contempt for Wang Foo and Taio Li, the bandits left the water in place of the treasure. (Close the center door while fastening it, slide the double section to the left, taking the water from the center section and bringing the solid stack back to the center.)

Meanwhile Wang Foo and Taio Li slumbered peacefully. But Quong Hi's sleep was fitful and disturbed and early the next morning he rushed to the apartment of Wang Foo. (In a deep voice, imitating a Chinaman, if you can:) "Wang Foo! Wang Foo! Watched thou well during the night the treasure of Quong Hi?"

(Changing the voice:) "Aye, Sire. Watched I well. None so much as approached the door of the treasure chamber."

Then Quong Hi rushed to Taio Li's apartment. Knocking, he cried, "Taio Li! Taio Li! Watched thou well during the night the treasure of Quong Hi?"

"Aye, Sire. Watched I well. None so much as approached the door of the treasure chamber."

At the crack of dawn the bandits hurried to the place where they had hidden Quong Hi's treasure. But they found to their dismay (lift the cylinder and show the jar of water) the despised water. While Quong Hi's treasure (open the center door and take out the checkers), like bread cast upon water, had returned to him. Such is the story of Quong Hi. (Bow slowly to show definitely that the trick is at an end.)

Note that every maneuver in showing the conditions or operating the device has been carefully provided for under a natural excuse provided by the course of events during the narration of the story. There is no need to make any dangerous moves or take any chances as the story is built up to put you in position to operate everything.

The attention is not on you as a magician, but is on the story. It is the type of story which seems to get under their hides, probably because of the human interest created by the kindly old philanthropist. Don't bother trying to do this for an audience of drunks.

Tommy Martin's Cards to the Pocket

Tommy Martin's routine as described by Dariel Fitzkee

(In an earlier column Dariel discussed his Diminishing Cards routine and explained that it followed his Cards to the Pocket routine as a mock explanation of how the latter was done. In the April, 1939 column he discusses the Cards to the Pocket routine, thereby completing the two routine set. – drg)

Speaking of routines, Chris Charlton, the English magician, does a clever combination of the Cards To the Pocket and the Diminishing Cards, using the diminishing cards as an "explanation" of the Cards To the Pocket. Incidentally, he is one of the few professional magicians using the Martin Chapender method of doing the diminishing cards. In his hands it is effective as all of the changes are done in the act of closing his extended hand and turning it over.

Years ago I saw Tommy Martin do a routine for the Cards to the Pocket that I have always remembered. I do not know whether the routine is his or not. He did not say it was his. But the routine as he does it is a good example of how a trick may be built up,

Here is the picture from the spectators' viewpoint:

He counts eleven cards off of the pack and puts the pack down, taking another and saying, "We'll make it an even dozen." Then he puts his hand in his right trousers pocket and pulls it inside out, bringing out also a silver dollar. Putting his pocket back in place he drops the dollar back in.

The first two cards pass singly after which the cards remaining in the hand are counted to show ten remaining. With a spectator holding his left wrist, which hand contains the ten cards, he snaps the pack and the spectator himself reaches into the performer's pocket and takes out the card. But the careful performer plunges his own hand into the pocket, after the card is removed, saying. "You didn't take my dollar, did you?"

He brings the dollar out and puts it in his vest pocket, grinning as he does so.

"Did you feel any other cards?" he asks the spectator assistant. The spectator says, "No."

Two cards pass simultaneously and the remaining cards are counted, revealing but seven left, Another, the sixth, passes and the remainder is again counted – six.

Here the pocket is again shown empty after which he says, "I'll pass two more cards." But when he reaches into the pocket his hand comes out empty and then, grumbling, "They didn't arrive."

He plucks them from beneath his coat at the shoulder, shows them, shoves them back to the shoulder again, slaps himself and finally recovers them from his pocket. One more passes in the regulation manner, leaving three remaining.

The tenth passes, but he digs this out from beneath his vest saying, "This spade is digging in." The two remaining cards are held, one in each hand, the two hands circling about each other in front of his face. The cards are placed together and immediately only one is tossed out, showing the eleventh to have vanished. Number twelve is placed in the hand and subsequently is recovered from the pocket.

End of Routine

Jesse Mueller's Sympathetic Silks

Jesse Mueller's routine as described by Dariel Fitzkee

Jesse Mueller has a routine with the Sympathetic Silks that always receives several distinct hands.

He shows six white silks and counts them one by one. Explaining that the silks are woven from silk spun from cocoons from the same parent pair. He points out that because of the relationship of one with the other, a strange harmony had developed among them.

Three of the silks are laid aside and the other three are tied end to end in the conventional manner. The latter three are placed over the back of a chair. He steps to the first three and shows them to have tied themselves in sympathy.

Saying, "I want you to see that they are genuine knots," he hands them to a spectator with the request that he untie them. This the spectator does, and at the performer's request he holds the three separated silks up "so that the others may see." Then, stepping to the second three he shows that they sympathetically have separated themselves as well.

Putting down the second three again, the performer asks the spectator to tie the silks in another manner – "As a suggestion you might take all three ends together and tie them in a single knot. Don't tie them too tightly, as I shall ask you to untie them again." When the spectator has tied the three ends together in a single knot, Mueller asks him to hold the silks up again – so the others may see how they are arranged."

By holding the ends of two of the silks the third hangs down from the knot, showing the three together in a common center.

When Mueller picks up the set lying on the table he shows that they, too, have joined themselves in a like manner. The second set is dropped again and the spectator is requested to again untie the set he holds. When they are untied, Mueller picks up the silks one by one from the table, showing that they, too, have separated in sympathy.

End of routine

Both of the above tricks are old ones. They have been done countless times by magicians, good and bad, all over Europe and America. But each of these routines, Martin's with the Cards To the Pocket and Mueller's with the Sympathetic Silks, breathes a new spark of life and brings a unique bit of individuality to each man's presentation. Notice that the tricks are essentially the same as they have always been. Yet a little bit of personality has been added in deft touches here and there.

Only a few days ago I chatted a long time with Tommy Martin about these things. I have known him for years. As a matter of fact I was privileged to witness his start on the road which ultimately took him to the heights. I am going to quote him as nearly as I can remember,

"Dariel," he said, "The tricks I do don't fool anyone much. I don't care whether they do or not. All I care is that they are entertaining to the audiences. I was a magician once, a fellow who did tricks to fool people. When I stopped fooling them and started entertaining them, I began going places."

I think that this is one of the biggest secrets in magic. (And, of course, that was the key to *Showmanship for Magicians*. – drg)

The Shrine of Osiris

by Dariel Fitzkee

A dramatic magic and illusion presentation from Genii,
Volume 6, No. 2, October, 1941.
(Actual Playing Time: Nine Minutes.)

Scene. The inner shrine of an Egyptian Temple. The scene may be an elaborately painted one, with the illusion cabinet center up-stage. Or it may be a set in pulled drapes, dark preferably, such as may be found on almost any stage.

Downstage center is a table. Behind it is an arm chair. Slightly to the left of the table stands another chair. On the table may be seen the set of rice bowls, a tray, a container holding rice, and a papyrus roll.

THE PROPERTIES

Transformation Cabinet. This is a cabinet six by six in floor area and seven feet high. There is a front door and a small narrow one on the right side at the rear. Diagonally across the opening is a plate glass, arranged in such a manner that when strip lights are on in the section at the left of the door a skeleton, in that section, is visible in the plate; and when the light in the section at the right of the door is on the glass is transparent and invisible. The illusion principle is similar to that of the Pepper's Ghost.

The essentials for this cabinet include seven framed pieces which hinge together, a black floor cloth, a plate glass, the skeleton, two strip lights with separate connections to separate floor pockets. (Or separately connected to individual dimmers.)

Chair for High Priest – Egyptian in style. With arms.
Table – Egyptian.
Chair for Neophyte.
Roll of Papyrus.

Set of Brahma Rice Bowls – Loaded with water.

Container – A vase filled with rice.

Tray – For rice bowls.

Phonograph Pick-up – With amplifier and speakers.

Victor Record – No. 8111-A. "Aida"

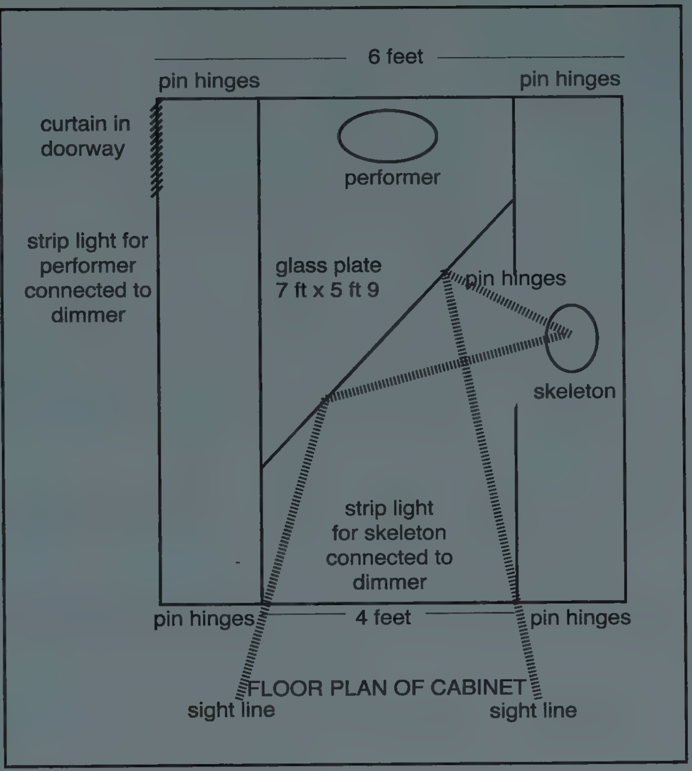
Temple Scene (Act 1) – Part 1 – (Verdi-Ezio Pinza and Metropolitan Opera Chorus, Opera House Orchestra.)

THE CHARACTERS

Amen-El-Nadib – High priest of the temple. Elaborate white and gold costume with high head-dress.

Menaphir – A neophyte. In tights, loin cloth, Egyptian collar, sandals.

Assistants – One. Electrician to operate the phonograph and dimmers.


6 feet
pin hinges
pin hinges
curtain in doorway
performer
strip light for performer connected to dimmer
glass plate 7 ft x 5 ft 9
pin hinges
skeleton
strip light for skeleton connected to dimmer
pin hinges
4 feet
pin hinges
sight line
sight line

FLOOR PLAN OF CABINET

ACT ONE

Scene. As the curtains slowly part voices of the priestesses are heard, chanting to the accompaniment of harps. The music is soft, as if from some distant part of the temple. From a brazier at one side is seen rising wisps of smoke, which is finally scented as incense.

Standing immovable at the center of the stage is discovered the High Priest. He stands, partially turned towards the doorway as the chant rises in volume. Presently it diminishes and as it does so the High Priest steps into the cabinet, then turns towards the right to speak.

High Priest – (Reading in sonorous accents, almost like a chant.) "Hark all ye peoples of Egypt! Kings, queens, princes, citizens, subjects, wives, freemen and slaves!

"Hark ye to the voice of Osiris!

"For these many moons your sins have brought down on the lands of the Upper and Lower Nile famine and drought. The heart of Osiris is sore hurt because of the distress of his people. Osiris shall have compassion on ye.

"As sacrifice ye shall lay upon the sacrificial altar the one-twentieth part of all thy worldly possessions. One piece of gold from every twenty; one of thy castles from every twenty; one slave in twenty; one grain from every twenty.

"When this is done Osiris shall once more bestow his smile upon the lands of Egypt. He shall drive out the locusts, crush out the plague, relieve the drought, banish famine.

"For the sins of man are many, and the wrath of the Gods in the Judgment Hall is great. But the love and compassion of Osiris is greater.

It is spoken."

(As the High Priest finishes be pauses for a moment, the chant of the priestesses increasing in volume, then he walks slowly and thoughtfully from the cabinet and seats himself, meanwhile reading the papyrus. The chant continues throughout the act, rising and falling in volume with the dramatic action.)

(There is a knock at the door.)

High Priest – (Ignores it.) (The knock is repeated.) "Enter!" (Enter the Neophyte timidly. He lifts his hands above his head, saluting.)

High Priest – "Ah!"

Neophyte – "I have been sent here, Oh Most Holy One."

High Priest – (Motioning to chair.) "Be seated." (The Neophyte seats himself eagerly on the edge of the chair.)

High Priest – "For several moons, Oh Menaphir, the priests in the temple have been watching thee. Many excellent reports have come to me of thy service and devotion."

(The neophyte inclines his head.)

High Priest – "We of the priesthood are growing old, and it is necessary that some of the younger and promising among thee be assigned to assist us. For thee has been selected the highest honor of all. Thou are to assist the high priest, Amen-el-nadib. As thou hast doubtless guessed, I am he."

Neophyte – (Dropping to his knees.) "Master!"

High Priest – "Arise." (The neophyte does so.) "For several days thou hast been undergoing an ordeal through which few men go – and live. Thou hast already taken a solemn oath involving severe penalties shouldst thou foreswear the Priesthood or prove thyself unworthy of the confidence we have placed in thee. The consequences, terrible as they are, thou well know. No further pledge will be asked of thee. Art thou ready for further enlightenment?"

Neophyte – (In low voice.) "I wish to proceed."

High Priest – "Good. (A pause. Meanwhile the eyes of the High Priest burn intently into those of the Neophyte.) "No doubt, as a child thee recall having been brought to the huge figure of Osiris in the Valley of the Kings. Thou has heard it pronounce judgment, make prophesies and exact sacrifices."

Neophyte – "Aye!"

High Priest – "The first great secret I have to impart to thee is (impressively) – THERE IS NO OSIRIS!"

Neophyte – (Shocked.) "Master!"

High Priest – "Aye, I realize that it must come as a distinct shock. But I repeat: THERE IS NO OSIRIS!

"Thou art now seated within the head of that figure of Osiris. Just a few moments hence the figure spoke. Does thou know whose voice it was?

Neophyte – "The voice of Osiris!"

High Priest – "Nay! The voice was mine.

Neophyte – (Dismayed) "Thine, master?"

High Priest – "Aye. Mine is the voice of Osiris. None other."

Neophyte – (Timidly) "I do not believe that!"

High Priest – (Impatiently) "Fool! I speak the truth. Mine is the wisdom that governs Egypt. Not that of Osiris, and not that of Pharaoh. I, the high priest, Amen-el-nadib am the real Osiris.

Neophyte – "But thou are mortal, Oh master."

High Priest – "Osiris is no more immortal than I. (The neophyte shrinks back in horror.) Nay, wait I will show thee. (Seizing the rice bowls.) The one way of relieving famine is the creation of food. Osiris cannot do that. But I can. (He pours one bowl level full of rice.) See. I pour into this bowl rice from the Lower Nile. Just one bowl. Look whilst I cover it. (Turning bowls, but looking at the neophyte.) Speak! Does thou KNOW if Osiris can make two grains of rice where first there was but one?"

Neophyte – (In terror, shakes head.)

High Priest – (Taking off bowl.) "Behold! Amen-el-nadib can. (The rice overflows the bowls, and the High Priest pours it out onto the tray. Then he covers the bowls, releasing the air-hole in the upper bowl.) Look! Where there was one bowl full before, now there is two-fold. TWO grains for every grain that existed before.

"Equal to famine is the scourge of drought. Amen-el-nadib has the power also to solve that. Look again upon the two golden bowls! See – I wave my hands above them and command: WATER! (Pouring it from the bowls as the Neophyte shrinks back in awe.) And water thou seest where before there was none.

(Fiercely.) "Can Osiris, an empty image, do that?

(More quietly.) "Someday I shall teach thee that. But thou must study much before. I see thou art still cringing in disbelief.

(Angrily) "Why should all Egypt bow obeisance to Osiris when Egypt has Amen-el-nadib? Why should not all Egypt worship me? Where Osiris cannot, I CAN redouble the grains and bring water to the dry place. I, Amen-el-nadib!"

(Meanwhile the volume of the chanting priestesses continues to increase.)

High Priest – (Wildly) Look! Menaphir! I stand here and challenge Osiris. Nay, I challenge any and ALL Gods to deny MY power. (He throws his arms back and looks defiantly upwards.) Hurl forth, if thou canst, false Gods, thy thunderbolts of punishment!"

(The Neophyte hides his head under his arms and cowers in terror.)

High Priest – "Strike from this body the flesh and let me stand forth but a structure of bones, if thy power is greater than mine, Amen-el-nadib!

(A pause.)

High Priest – "Look, Menaphir. I stand before thee unharmed."

(The Neophyte looks up fearfully, reluctantly.)

High Priest – "Now, does thou believe?"

Neophyte – "No, master!"

High Priest – (Insanely) "Thou fool! I give thee a final proof. Yonder is the shrine reserved but for the feet of the Gods. It is written that for mortals to step within that sanctuary instant annihilation is the penalty. (Stepping to the right of the cabinet.)

(Chant increases in volume.)

High Priest – "Watch, Menaphir, I shall step into the sanctuary."

Neophyte – "No, no!"

High Priest – "Amen-el-nadib challenges the Gods to show a power greater than his. Amen-el-nadib WILL walk in the place of the Gods. There is none but me." (He steps through the right upstage door BEHIND the plate glass.)

(The Neophyte watches in awe.)

High Priest – (Shouting) "Strike, false Gods! (Shaking his fist upwards, and shouting insanely.) Strike, if thou hast the power. I challenge thee! Strike! Strike!"

(Lights in the rear of the cabinet gradually dim while those in the front compartment are gradually brought up, bringing in the image of the skeleton. The figure of the High Priest becomes transparent and the bones of his body gradually become visible, while the High Priest shouts in fear and terror. The chant of the priestesses comes on in full volume. The Neophyte throws himself face downward on the floor. The flesh falls from the body of the High Priest and he stands there a skeleton.)

My Favorite Trunk Routine

by Dariel Fitzkee

By Dariel Fitzkee, from *My Best,* edited by J. G. Thompson, Jr., p. 305.
This routine also appeared in the August, 1938 *Sphinx* magazine.

As the curtains part the almost imperceptible throb of faraway tom-toms seems to be felt rather than heard. Dressed in a Hindoo costume of white satin, the performer is seen standing "in one." At the extreme right is a small stand upon which may be seen a black beard and a turban.

He says, "Among the better known Oriental tricks is the fabled Hindoo Basket Trick. In India the natives use a woven wicker basket. But, because it is more familiar to you, I shall use a salesman's sample trunk.

"Before starting, I should like to ask that two or three gentlemen or ladies come up on the stage and inspect the two trunks in question." (The inspection may be eliminated, in which event the trunks are shown by the performer and his assistant.)

The drums stop. The curtains behind the performer open. Made up costumed as a slave, the performer's assistant is seen standing with arms folded. Upstage, center, is a large cloth cabinet. On each side of this cabinet are large braziers from which curls the smoke of burning incense.

To the left, and somewhat farther downstage, is a large wooden chest or trunk resting upon a skeleton platform. This platform is supported on casters.

In silence, except for the noise necessary in moving the trunk and except for brief explanatory remarks, the committee makes an examination of the visible trunk. The cabinet is opened and what appears to be a salesman's sample trunk is revealed. This, too, is inspected, after which the spectators return to their seats.

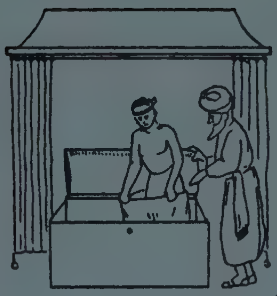
The performer steps downstage. "To keep this demonstration in character, I shall take the part of a Hindoo magician." He dons the false beard and the turban.

At the clap of his hands the tom-toms start throbbing softly. His assistant touches his right hand to his forehead, mouth, chest, and bows to the performer. The drums continue to beat.

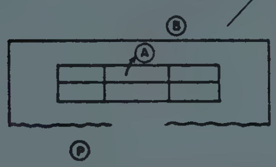
The magician and the slave wheel the wooden chest forward. They turn all sides towards the audience and, facing the front again, the chest is tipped towards the spectators, who can plainly see that there is nothing inside. Meanwhile, the drums beat.

Then the trunk in the draped cabinet is shown, after the chest on its platform is pushed aside. The exotic rhythms of the drums seem louder.

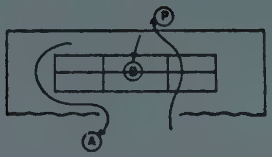
The slave steps into the trunk. His hands are tied. He steps into a cloth bag. This is tied. The lid of the trunk is crashed down. The trunk is locked. More drums are beating



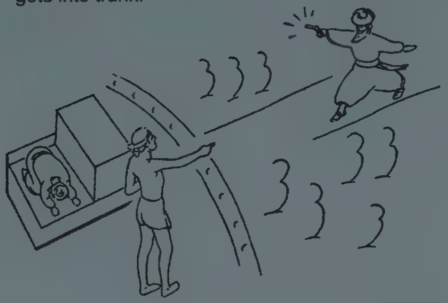
Putting assistant "A" into trunk, from which he escapes pronto. When trunk is opened, performer is found inside.



Position at start of Substitution Trunk. (P) is performer standing in front of cabinet. A) is assistant who has just gotten out of trunk and is crouching behind same.
(B) is second asistant, hiding behind cabinet and dressed exactly like prformer.



THE ACTION: The performer enters cabinet and goes out the back. The first assistant comes out of cabinet while assistant (B) enters cabinet and gets into trunk.



Finale: Performer disappears from tip-over box and appears running down the aisle shooting pistol. The performer's double shown back of trunk.

now, drums of another pitch, deeper.

Ropes are tied around the trunk on all sides. Newer and faster rhythms beat upon the air. There seem to be more drummers. The tempos become excited.

Standing in front of the cabinet with the curtains partly drawn, the performer holds up his hand. Suddenly he darts to the cabinet. The curtains whisk shut behind him as he dives inside. But the curtains sweep right open again.

Furious now is the battering of the drums – loud, primitive, frenzied.

The curtains are opened by the slave – not the magician. The magician is nowhere to be seen. The slave drags the trunk forward. The ropes are untied. The lock is thrown. The trunk lid is heaved upwards. Someone is in the sack.

When it is untied the performer steps out. He walks forward and bows.

But the magician cannot speak. It would be useless because of din of the drums. New drums add to the rhythms beating at your ears drums with deeply vibrating tones. Their thuds and booms roll about you on all sides. The very air reverberates with the force.

The magician dashes to the chest on the platform. He leaps within, into another sack cloth. Its folds are quickly pulled up about him. Then the top of the sack is thrust through a hole in the front of the chest. The slave slams down the lid.

Amid the terrific hammering, throbbing, booming, of the wildly beaten drums, the trunk is turned clear around.

Then the slave grabs the sack. He pulls it through the hole – empty!

Blam! Blam! Blam!

Down the aisle, from the back of the theater, rushes the magician. He is firing a revolver. He dashes up the runway.

The drums stop.

In the silence the magician removes his turban and beard. He is unmistakably the performer.

The spectators' attention swings back to the wooden chest. But the slave has tipped it forward, open. The chest is empty except for a thin wisp of smoke which curls from somewhere inside.

I have given you the spectators' aspect of the trick because I think that is the only way any magical effect should be considered.

To informed magicians the complete routine is recognizable as a combination of the substitution and tip-over trunk tricks.

But there are also the drums.

These drums, gradually building up from the soft beat of a single tom-tom to the volume of many beaten with full force, with added drummers contributing to the rhythms, increasing slowly in tempo, literally lift the audience. The spectators simply cannot fail to react to this pulse-stimulating showmanship.

But there are other matters that need explaining.

For instance, there is another assistant. He is dressed and made up as a "double" to the performer. He waits behind the rear drapes of the cabinet.

After the trunk is tied up, the front drapes of the cabinet are pulled partly closed. During an interval of time, the performer steps forward and holds up his hand, as if to center attention upon himself.

But while the performer is doing this, the slave escapes from the trunk and crouches behind it.

When the magician jerks the curtain closed, the slave dives for it to reopen it. At the same time, the "double" darts from behind the rear drapes of the cabinet and plunges into the trunk, closing it behind him. Simultaneously the magician leaps through the back cabinet drape.

The cabinet stands sufficiently close to the rear of the stage so that performer can make his way from the rear of the cabinet, unseen, through the backdrop, and thence off stage. Once backstage, the performer secures the revolver and makes his way around to the rear of the audience. He watches the action until it is time for him to appear.

Of course, the double comes out of the substitution trunk as the performer. Afterwards, it is he who steps into the tip-over trunk. This trunk is shown empty before the performer starts shooting. By this time the tip-over trunk, on its platform, is immediately in front of the partly closed curtains of the drapery cabinet.

Allowing the performer to get well down the aisle, the double, crouching behind the chest, steps from the platform deliberately. He steps into the cabinet and behind the drawn drapes. The attention is on the performer, of course. However, there is no reason why the double should not stay on the platform.

Explanation is hardly necessary in connection with the sacks. Both are bottomless.

The smoke detail is made possible by the slave secretly handing the double a lighted cigarette, which is planted in a lighted cigarette holder, in a convenient location. We used the folds on the drapery cabinet. He secured it as the double dashed to the tip-over box. A rubber tube, permanently affixed to the false side of the tip-over box, the side which is later to represent the bottom, permits the double to blow a puff of smoke into the box after it is tipped and just before the lid is lifted.

I have found that six to ten tom-toms, ranging in size from the smallest to those about the size of a bass drum, are sufficient. Usually three drummers can handle the situation.

The entire running time is eight minutes.

I Won't Play Cards with You

by Dariel Fitzkee from *My Best*, edited by J. G. Thompson Jr., p. 134

Magical literature is replete with sleights and ideas for table demonstrations of gamblers' techniques, but there are very few practical routines. I have found the following routine to be sufficiently short to retain interest. I have used it informally, at the card table, when requested to do so at a gathering of friends or acquaintances. Once it was featured as my part in an impromptu entertainment staged by and for a trainful of WAAFs and R.A.F. and R.C.A.F. fliers in the observation car aboard a transcontinental train speeding across Canada. Using a tilted board in place of a card table, I have presented it repeatedly at canteen entertainments for members of our armed services.

As outlined here the routine catches audience interest, builds as audience participation is brought in, and finishes with strong climactic impact.

All the magician needs is a new, unopened deck of cards and the ability to perform the necessary sleights with ease.

The Routine: "Whenever people hear that I'm a magician," the magician begins, "they invariably say, sooner or later, 'I won't play cards with you.' Everybody seems to expect some crooked card tactics. I don't see why. I'm just an honest magician, trying to get along as best I can.

"But I suspect this is what they expect:" He shows an unopened pack of cards. He explains that being unopened, the cards are in the order as originally packed at the factory. Opening the deck, he fans the cards and shows them to be in the usual sequences.

He does a false haymow shuffle, retaining the original order of the cards. "If I shuffle the cards this way," he continues "they have an idea that the cards will still be unmixed." He fans the cards. The are still in the original order. "Like this."

"Or, if I riffle them like this." He does a false riffle shuffle, retaining the original order. "They think they will be in their original order. Like this." He shows the cards still unmixed.

"Even if I cut the cards." Do a fancy false cut. "They still think they will be like this." He shows cards still unmixed.

"So, in self defense, all I can do is to give the pack to someone else to shuffle. Would you mind?" He hands the deck to a spectator for shuffling. As the spectator shuffles, the magician comments upon where he thinks the spectator plays cards or learned to play, judging from the type of shuffle employed.

When he takes the cards back he says, "Even with a shuffled pack – a pack shuffled by admittedly honest players..." Nod deferentially to the shuffler. "I'm still under suspicion. Then they think I deal seconds like this." Turn over the top card and run a few seconds. Deal off the top reversed card finally. "You see, dishonest gamblers manage to glimpse the top card. By dealing seconds, they can prevent an opponent from getting a helpful card..." Meanwhile the magician has glimpsed the top card and second deals three cards, placing them out as if he were dealing four hands, the fourth card – the top card – the top card glimpsed – being_dealt to himself. "Suppose I needed a Nine of Spades." The magician actually calls the card glimpsed. "If I could second-deal, I would give the second card to my opponents, instead of the first, and then when it came to my hand, I'd, of course, deal off the top card, the Nine of Spades, to myself. "Pick it up and turn it over, showing the Nine of Spades or whatever happened to be the top card flashed.

"Or they might suspect that I deal bottoms. Dealing bottoms looks like this: "Demonstrate and explain. Spot any four of a kind, say the four Queens, cull them out and shuffle them to the bottom. "For example, in actual play, they might think that I would maneuver the four Queens to the bottom of the deck." Show the culled cards at the bottom, calling them by their actual names. "Then, in dealing four hands, they'd have an idea that I might bottom deal the four Queens to myself." Deal four hands, bottom dealing the four culled cards to yourself. Show them.

"People have the wildest ideas as to what a magician may or may not do. For example, here are the four Queens." Fan the cards and tuck the Queens, one at a time, in various locations, calling attention to the fact that the Queens are widely separated. Close the fan and push the cards into the pack, executing the diagonal palm shift as explained in Erdnase. This brings the four Queens together at the bottom of the pack. Run up four hands using the Milk Build Shuffle.

(Note: The Milk Build Shuffle is well-known to magicians, but, by name, it may be confusing. This is a shuffle of the haymow type. Magician shuffles the cards from the right into the left hand. The pack is held with the face toward the right palm. As the left thumb rakes off the top card into the left hand, the left fingers pull the bottom card of the pack down behind the top card. Single cards to a number two less than the number of hands are pulled into the left from the top of the pack, onto the "milked" pair. Then the "milk" move is made again, taking the top and bottom cards together, and the required number of indifferent cards are shuffled onto the stock. The next card is injogged and the remainder of the deck is shuffled onto those in the left. Cut to the injog and throw "stock" on top.)

"People have an idea that magicians can run up hands as they shuffle. Thus, when the cards are dealt out. . ." Deal them out. "The magician can get a hand made up of the four Queens." Show them.

"As a matter of fact, running up a hand is a complicated matter." Put the four Queens on top of the pack openly, telling the spectators what you are doing. Run the top Queen to the bottom and injog the top one of the three remaining Queens. "To run up a hand, you've got to run six cards. Then you outjog the seventh card and run the remainder of the pack on top, bringing the last card to the top." Do this shuffle, which is the familiar Erdnase for four hands, as you explain the exact procedure. "Now you undercut to the outjog, carrying a break at the injog. Run three cards and throw the remaining cards to the break. Run a single card. Injog the second one. Run six and outjog the seventh. Now shuffle off the remainder naturally. Here you undercut to the injog and throw on top. Now you undercut to the outjog and run three cards on top. The rest of the cards are thrown on top of that."

While this explanation is the true explanation of this maneuver, to the spectators it will seem like technical double-talk.

"Of course, it is true, when this setup is dealt out the magician will get the four Queens." Show them.

Put the four Queens on top again. "I've never had the time to learn it, but some people can run up hands with the riffle shuffle. It starts with the desired cards on top.

Will someone call the number of hands to be dealt?" Run up the desired number of hands so that the four Queens will fall together. Just before the last riffle, ask the spectators to call which hand is to win. Then riffle one card less than that number onto the top card of the stock. Deal them out and show the four Queens at the desired hand, remarking, "Of course, that requires a lot of special training and there's really no way my friends could know that I haven't had the time or inclination to bother with it. So I really can't blame them for suspecting me.

"But I do know one easy way to run up a hand. Can I get someone here to teach it to him ?"

When the spectator comes up, explain to him that the four desired cards are to be put on the bottom of the deck. Clearly show him how the top and bottom cards are pulled off together in the Milk Build Shuffle, after which two cards are run on top. Then show him how he must repeat this move three more times. While explaining the moves, do them, dealing the cards out in four hands, showing the four Queens to be at the dealer's place. As you pick up the cards, take out the four Queens and lay them aside. Then, in apparently arranging the deck again preparatory to the spectator's try, cull out the four Kings and place them third, sixth, ninth and twelfth from the top.

Ask the spectator if he is ready. Then place the four Queens on the bottom. Stand to his left and tell him he is to run up the deck for four hands. Then very slowly have him "milk off" the top and bottom cards together. Then have him thumb off, one by one, the next two cards. Again he pulls off the top and bottom as one and runs off two singly, on top of these. This is done twice more.

Insist that the spectator do this slowly, being certain that each card comes in its proper place. After the stock is complete, have him shuffle the remainder of his cards behind the stock.

"That wasn't too difficult to do, was it? – Oh, by the way, of course you are learning this shuffle just for your own personal amusement. You wouldn't attempt to use it when playing poker with friends, would you?" You're kidding. Both the spectators and your assistant know it. But your assistant will invariably insist that he doesn't intend to do anything dishonest.

"Deal out the cards in four hands, starting with me." The cards are dealt, face down. "Now suppose I am that friend of yours that took you for plenty the last time you had a poker session. Do you mean to say that if he had, say, three of a kind, or even a straight or a flush, you wouldn't bet him? That you'd throw those four nice juicy Queens away? What would you bet him? Five, ten, twenty dollars? Would you like to take a peek and make sure that you've got them? Turn them over so all of us can see."

He shows the four Queens at his, the assistant's hand. "Would you throw that away and let him get away with his dough? You'd take him for a ten or a twenty now, wouldn't you?" Invariably the spectator will say, "Yes."

"That's what I was afraid you'd say," the magician continues. "You forget. He might not be honest like you." You turn over your hand. "He might have four Kings – like these." Show the four Kings in your hand.

After the spectator returns to his seat, and during the ensuing excitement, cull out the Ace, King, Queen, Jack and Ten of Spades. Put these on the bottom of the deck.

"I'm going to show you how cards naturally come, when the dealer is honest." Shuffle the deck, retaining the bottom stock. Then deal out five hands, card by card, face up. While you are dealing, be looking for one card in each hand which you are ultimately going to secure for a hand for yourself. This may be four of a kind, a flush, a full house or even a straight. Note where the desired cards are in each hand. This is done while you are commenting upon the respective hands as they develop.

Put the rest of the deck down, saying, "I'm only going to use the cards you have just seen." Pick up the hands one by one. Pick them up in such a way that the desired card is the bottom one of each five. Put each hand, thus arranged, down intact, one on top of the other. Then take this partial deck and give it a false riffle shuffle.

Deal the cards out again, face down. The selected hand should come fifth, to you. Now pick out a spectator for each hand and ask him to play it.

Turn over the first hand, call it and ask the first spectator how many cards he wants to draw. Take out the discarded cards, pick up the remainder of the deck, and deal his draw face down.

Repeat this with the second, third and fourth spectators and their respective hands. Then turn over each draw and show what each player's hand becomes. During this, shift the five-card royal flush stock from the bottom of the pack to the top. The chances are extremely remote that any of the hands will be better than the one on the table which you selected and set up for yourself. This hand is still not revealed to the spectators.

If any of the players draws a better hand than the one selected by you, turn your hand over, discard it and draw a full new hand. This is the royal flush now on top of the pack.

However, normally your table hand will be sufficient to win. If so, show it.

Then tell the spectators you are going to let them make up a hand from all of the cards showing. Many times they can beat the hand with which you won. If not, give them some help from the discard.

Then: "Of course, I haven't drawn yet. The hand on the table is my original hand. If I suspected for a moment that there were any such shenanigans as this going on, probably it would be better for me if I discarded this hand and drew another."

Then deal out the royal flush, showing it card by card as it comes off the deck.

Finish by saying, "I hope you won't suspect an honest magician the next time he wants to play cards with you."

The running time is twelve minutes.

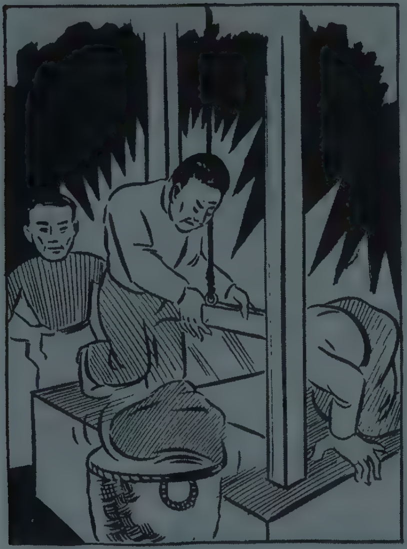
Note: The various sleights referred to may be found in the following books: *The Expert at the Card Table,* by Erdnase; *Expert Card Technique,* by Hugard and Braue; and ...and *A Pack of Cards,* by Merlin.

Broad Comedy Follow-up for the Guillotine Trick

by Dariel Fitzkee

(This comedy routine is the exact one that followed the Guillotine routine in the first half of both versions of Dariel's magical musical revues, *International Magicians in Action,* and *Magic in the Air.* Dariel placed the routine in the special "Fitzkee Parade" in the April, 1946 issue of *The Linking Ring.* It was the only item by him in that parade. – drg)

After the regular presentation of the chopper-type guillotine, two comics enter. One of them has just witnessed the performance of the trick. He asks the other if he would



like to see a good trick. Upon receiving an affirmative answer, the first comic says, "All right, pal." He hands the second comic a cloak with a hood and a blindfold, "Just put these on."

After some objection, the second comic dons the costume and is led to the guillotine.

Normally, the guillotine is not seen at the beginning of the scene, it being set up atop a platform which is concealed by a pair of close-in curtains. When the curtains open, as the comics start through, the stage is seen cluttered up with tables, all piled high with apparatus – the raised guillotine dominating the setting.

Two assistants attired in a fashion that would make a Geezarian Admiral look like a tramp, stand on each side of the chopper.

"This ain't gonna take long, pal," says the first comic, leading his stumbling victim up the stairs. "It's just a little experiment."

The other asks, "What's an experiment?"

"Somethin' you ain't sure is gonna work."

When they reach the guillotine, the first comic says, "Now just rest your neck in this nice comfortable horse collar. Now ain't that nice? I'll put the rest of this wooden fur neckpiece on you just to keep you warm." The other says, "I ain't cold."

"I know it. That's MY teeth that are chattering." All is made ready, during which four or five more assistants come onstage to watch.

The first comic now speaks: "Ladies and gentlemen! I take great pleasure in presenting for you the greatest trick in the world. This trick is colossal. It's stupendous. It's the most terrific, the most astounding, the most baffling, the most hair-raising, the world's greatest-stupendous-terrific-colossal.He stands there speechless, fumbling for a suitable adjective. Finally, the pent-up pressure is expressed as he yells, "HUBBA-HUBBA!"

The blade is inserted. The second comic yells. The blade encounters resistance. The first comic pushes with all of his strength. Something snaps. The second comic's head, in the hood, falls off onto the floor.

For one startled moment the first comic, the assistants and the sightseers onstage are frozen immobile. Then, with a yell of terror, suddenly they all jump to make their getaways. They knock each other down. They tip over the tables. Apparatus crashes to the floor. Stumbling and falling and crawling frantically, they wildly take flight.

Finally the stage is empty. All is silent.

The headless body stands up. It, too, starts sneaking offstage, tiptoeing to safety. Almost at the exit the body stops, hesitates. It goes back, fumbles and feels around for the head. Finding it, as the music swells into "Anne Boleyn," the body tucks the head under its arm – and flees.

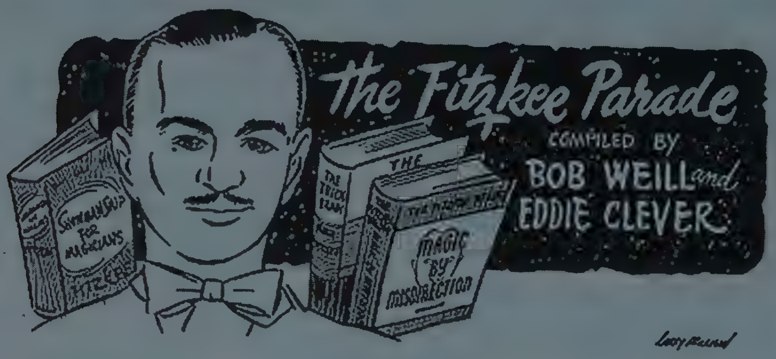
In explanation, little needs to be told. The cloak is equipped with a shoulder framework. The extra head is on a light stick, concealed in the cloak. The second comic turns his back as the cloak is put on. Assisting him, the first comic adjusts the shoulder arrangement so that it rests upon the second comic's head – the duplicate head extending above. This head is almost entirely covered with the hood.

When the second comic is attired, he squats somewhat, beneath the folds of the long cloak. The first comic stands in front of him as much as possible, helping him to the chopper. Actually, of course, the second comic's neck is never in the neck-piece. The duplicate head, supported by the light stick, doubles for the comic's real head.

The chopper actually severs the stick and the head falls to the floor. The rest is obvious.

(Anne Boleyn, of course, was one of Henry VIII's wives. She was beheaded. – drg)

The Linking Ring Fitzkee Parade



Dariel Fitzkee had no greater fans than Bob Weill and Eddie Clever, the Parade Boys of *The Linking Ring*. They began collecting materials for "The Fitzkee Parade" contest some time in 1945. The only criterion was that contributions had to show the application of one or more of Dariel's principles set forth in *The Fitzkee Trilogy*. Nineteen items were submitted and Dariel had the responsibility of selecting six prizewinners. 1st prize was a $25 gift certificate good at any dealer. Prizes 2 through 6 were copies of Dariel's publications. Plus, Dariel agreed to write a letter, if requested, to each of the contributors. The letter would include advice, suggestions for improvement – if discerned – suggestions for further applications of additional principles and, in fact, a helpful, frank appraisal of the contribution and how it might be strengthened and improved in the light of the ideas set forth in *The Fitzkee Trilogy*.

It will be seen that, other than with the top two entrees (both by Tommy Windsor, a top-flight professional of the time) Dariel selected theoretical analysis articles over tricks. And Windsor's first prize-winning article is really not a trick or routine, although it is an idea for a routine. This does not surprise us. After all, Dariel wrote his *Trilogy* so that magicians would consider their over-all approach to presentation, not just consider tricks.

Dariel was asked to write an article to be included in the Parade and, in addition, he submitted his own routine for the Guillotine illusion, a variation of the one that was a part of the *International Magicians in Action* show. Before presenting the six prize-winning articles we give you Dariel's article. His routine is printed separately in this appendix. The material in this section is courtesy of Samuel Patrick Smith, editor of *The Linking Ring* magazine.

LOST IN THE HORS D'OEUVRES or...
IT'S ALL SO CONFUSING

Dariel Fitzkee

Being the guest of honor in a parade is a new experience to me. I don't know how to act. The only parade I ever dreamed I might star in is as lead-off man ahead of a posse. How the h-- do I know there isn't a posse behind me right now?

Maybe there is. Maybe there's a flock of Vandyke-bearded gents, wild eyes flashing, long hair streaming behind them, yelling for my blood and brandishing Kellar bases. Could be. Maybe that dream I had the other night, the one where the underfed birds with the dirty fingernails were riding gold and purple dragons fresh from production boxes – riding the dragons, wearing turbans, backpalming cards the while... maybe that wasn't a dream.

Only the other day a guy says to me, "Do you know X?" I don't dast to mention the name he named. He might expose me. He's exposed everything else. Anyway, this guy says, "Do you know So-and-so?" I says to him, "Yeah, the dirty*/'I*." The guy interrupts, "You know 'im all right. Well, he says your book on showmanship is lousy." Meekly, I replies, "He ain't alone."

And he ain't. More guys than I can count to have told other guys that my showmanship book is no good. Almost as many have written to me that the book is swell. Some of them have written it for anybody to read. The unanimity of the lack of unanimity about this is so complete that it is confusing.

I'm confused. You're confused. Everybody's confused. Like the old bird I am talking to the other day: He gets me over in a corner and tells me that he wishes Joe Spivins would read my book. Then he goes on to tell me how Joe 'wades through the corn in his act. Point by point – or maybe it should be pint by pint – he takes up each step in my book and shows me where I must have been thinking of Joe. The bird's damn near memorized my book.

Five minutes later Joe Spivins has me in another corner. He tells me he wishes Otto Dabney would read my book. Otto's the guy I'm just through talking to. Then he goes on and tells me about the corn in Otto's act. He, too, knows my showmanship book quart-by-quart. And he tells me about Otto practically what Otto tells me about him.

Each guy thinks I wrote the book about the other guy. Darn few of them think it fits them.

Lots of guys give me h-- for saying such sacreligious things about magic. But they forget. Those aren't my ideas, as I so carefully pointed out in *Showmanship for Magicians*. Those ideas came from the show business, to which magic is sometimes rumored to belong. I only collected the information. It is information that should be evident to all. It is in plain sight. Every show you see – I mean big-time show – reveals it minute-by-minute. Every attendance record you look at proves it dollar-by-dollar.

I wish they'd quit blaming me about it. It ain't my fault that the show business has progressed a half-century since the gay nineties. It ain't my fault that most of the magicians – wait a minute, I didn't say ALL – insist on staying with the long past. After all I'm only one guy, and there must be – I'm sometimes almost convinced – some nine hundred thousand calling themselves magicians. It seems that anyone who has annexed a repertoire of one ten cent trick immediately begins calling himself a magician. It's such an easy thing to call one's self. And the penalty is only ostracism by the few who realize the implications.

But I really am provoked about *The Trick Brain*. I knocked myself out on that one. And my old chum Tom Bowyer, that old profound thinker, has to read it one night when he's all tired out. Then he reviews it in *THE LINKING RING*. This is essentially a handbook on the fundamentals of the mechanics of magic. I say so in the Introduction, and the first three or four pages of Chapter Thirty-three clearly detail this, and the reasons. I even say in the second sentence of Chapter Thirty-three that "the trick brain" section has not been the underlying purpose in the book. As a matter of fact, along about page 237, one of the objects, the penetrator and the method should be recognized as a trick which is pretty well known. The "round object" could be a cigarette. The penetrator is a "razor blade." And one basic method suggested is "one obstacle used – moved aside." Joe Berg's "Cutting a Camel in Half," listed in Thayer's catalogue, No. 7S, published in 1932 – fourteen years ago – meets the set of conditions exactly.

But what's the matter with an effect where a block of ice penetrates a tambourine? The ice could penetrate without damaging the tambourine and without melting.

Under the proper circumstances, an egg which penetrates a hair net might be as interesting to a spectator as an egg which penetrates a handkerchief. Perhaps it might even be more puzzling because the egg would be visible all the time.

By the way, none of those effects are exactly rubber-stamp, are they? At least the last five magicians the audience saw would not have performed the same tricks.

And, if it should happen that none of these effect suggestions would suit, there are still numerous possibilities. Remember, "the trick brain" merely suggests ideas which may be elaborated. You are not to stop thinking when you get the suggested trick. This is merely the starter, the stimulus. A razor blade suggests to me something sharp – anything sharp. It suggests a knife. First, a small one; then a larger one. The knife becomes a sword. Yes, that's it. A sword. The round object is a balloon. We encase it in a net, not necessarily a hair net. The "hairgoods" suggestion suggested a hair net. The hair net suggests any net.

Now we inflate the balloon and encase it in a net. The sword is sliced right down through the balloon. It penetrates the balloon without breaking it. It passes clear through, and the net enveloping the balloon is cut in two and falls in two pieces on either side of the sword blade.

How to do it? I still insist that isn't important. Anyone can figure out a way to accomplish an objective, once the objective becomes clear. But if you can't think of methods, what's the matter with the three suggestions Tom dug up? Move the obstacle aside. Or catapult the sword blade around the balloon. Or, if you prefer, work on the two dual identity objects.

But I really can't blame Tom for being tired. He knocked himself out in the second paragraph of his review determining which of two "scientific" systems is really "scientific." Incidentally, he decided in favor of the system featuring blank spaces. You see, that is equivalent to giving individual meanings to an untold number of blank spaces, which is an undertaking only possible to omniscience. But one system is based on astronomy and mathematics and the other on apparent impossibilities!

He does have me on his race track tip parallel. For the benefit of those who came in late, he suggests that the guy who sells race track (Webster shows it without the hyphen) tips rarely shows any evidence of having won any bets. So, then, he says I write a book on trick inventing, but he never heard that I was particularly prominent as a trick inventor.

Leopold Auer taught Heifetz, Elman, Seidel and a number of other great musicians HOW to play the fiddle. But I never heard of Auer playing the fiddle himself.

However, to set your mind at rest, I have a rope trick that a couple of the boys in New York wanted to buy to the extent of some bucks. Thayer used to list a ring routine I fooled a lot of people with. Tom Dethlefsen of the Stull Magic Manufacturing Co. has the only model of a honey of an alarm clock trick I doped out and used to do. I've got a few more. But I never tried to sell 'em. You see, I don't invent my tricks to sell 'em. I invent 'em'to use 'em. Lots of guys do that. The only inventors of tricks you hear about are those that sell them or write them up. Now I'm going to ask a question. If that race track reasoning is correct, if the non-inventor telling how to invent is correct, how is it that a reviewer can tell me how books should be written ?

But the above is only clowning. Seriously now, I want to go on record as saying that Tom Bowyer is one of the ablest of the book reviewers. He is one of the ablest and most intelligent. I don't always agree with him – not by a h–– of a lot. But because I know he is honest with himself, and with the books he reviews, I respect his opinions and defend his right to say what he sincerely believes.

My books – any or all of them – are useful only for those who can get something out of them. Even the most expensive Stradivarius is of no value to anyone who can't play it. And I don't class my books with those fiddles.

If you need the kind of help *Showmanship For Magicians* can give you, if you can get that help from the book – even if it only results in crystallizing opposite but effective views, it IS valuable to you. If you get nothing from it, if reading and studying it leads to nothing – even opposing conclusions which result in better audience receptions for you and your magic – it is of no value to you.

The same holds true of *The Trick Brain* – or any other of my books for that matter. If it makes you think, if you gain something beneficial through reading it, studying it, applying its ideas, it is of value to you. If not, it is no good.

So all comments on anything I've ever done are correct. They are correct, however, only in the light of the individual who made the comments. They are correct only from his viewpoint, his objectives, his understanding, his ability to utilize the information.

If anything I've ever put in print has caused magicians to think, think more often, more clearly, more deeply, more seriously – whether magicians generally agree with me or not – that work shall have served a useful purpose. No one can ask more of any endeavor.

The Parade Contest Winners:

First Prize: Major Johnny Jordan

Vent Act by Jeanne and Tommy Windsor
Inspired by Fitzkee's Showmanship for Magicians

The Major, Jeanne and Tommy Windsor

(I will describe this just as if I were talking to you.)

To begin, I always wanted a vent act AND a doll different from the run of the mill usually seen. The advent of Bergen into the movies made this all the more necessary, for even the small town folks now expect more from performers than ever before. It seems that I was always too busy to give the matter any thought, or too lazy, I don't know which... until about 13 or 14 months ago I bought Fitzkee's SHOWMANSHIP FOR MAGICIANS, then...

I realized, after a first quick reading, that this WAS a BOOK... and I don't mean perhaps; strong meat for some, but good hard facts immediately recognized by anyone who ever made a living at magic, as I have.

I read this book two or three times trying all along the line to see where I could benefit... PLENTY OF PLACES TOO when I tried to apply the same principles to VENTRILOQUISM as he was applying to magic. After all, it works the same for any brand of entertaining. Somewhere in my mind, I kept thinking of so many, many people, (in my wild and checkered travels), who had suggested, or some even claimed, there was an act like this - a vent act where the dummy was a made-up midget. I tried to explain to these kind-hearted people that it would be next to impossible to fool anyone this way; besides it might be all right for someone who wasn't a vent, but it would be uncricket for a real vent to stoop so low. Anyway, it wouldn't be practical, as you'd have to depend on the midget sticking with you, and besides... HE'D HAVE TO EAT... which a dummy doesn't need to do.

Suddenly, I thought, WHY NOT HAVE A DUMMY MADE-UP AS A MIDGET? This seemed a good thought, so I applied Fitzkee's book and determined that the dummy would have to be properly shaped, costumed, and look somewhat normal, instead of like one of the grotesque dummies with big heads, bright paint, crepe hair wigs, and flat hands, generally seen, if I wanted to appear in smart company. Well, Bergen and Charlie now have the advantage of Hollywood's make-up men, and the wig-makers, costumers, etc. Bergen can afford to spend as much for these things as I would make in a year. So after much pleading, Martin and Olga Stevens, the marionette people, consented to make the Major to order. These people were friends of ours, real artists, too, as anyone who ever saw their marionettes will testify. They have since quit the business, and Martin is now director of Ritual for the Scottish Rite, South Bend, Indiana, which keeps him too busy to do anything else. To get back: after two months' work on the Major, with a bale of correspondence and drawings passing back and forth from their marionette theatre at Middlebury, Indiana and me, I finally got him. I'm sure he's all Fitzkee or anyone else could want in a vent figure – that character, at least.

The Major's body is perfectly formed, proportioned exactly like a miniature human being; the head is also in correct proportion. A real hair wig was glued on, a small piece at a time, so it looks like REAL HAIR GROWING right out of his scalp. The arms and legs, jointed like a marionette under his suit, of course, only bend the way a human being's bend. In other words, you cannot put him in a suitcase, then fold his legs back over his head. He travels in his own special case that fits his full length. He has a chest and fanny shaped accordingly and will walk or stand erect by the balance method (hand on his shoulder). His head, which looks better in person than in the photo, because of the coloring, shading, etc., was modeled in clay. A plaster cast was made and then the head was re-cast in PLASTIC WOOD.

Thus, having the proper figure (which took 85 hours to make), I then devised the following act, also with one eye on Fitzkee's book. (The big problem in ventriloquism is to get rid of the chair – this always smacks of the medicine show – yet it is very hard to do, some support being needed, etc. Another bogey to vents in these modern days is to keep from doing something to show their greatness. These things have all been done, re-done, by better vents than I, and do not fit into the modern entertainment requirements, as outlined by Fitzkee.) So, I had George McAthy write the dialogue (very good too), all about midgets, either directly or indirectly.

The act is like this: A stand or platform is on stage such as used in the Ripley Store and Museum Shows, an individual stage. On this small platform is a small (child's) open-backed chair, also a smoking stand (for atmosphere), a rhinestone monogram on velvet drape of platform – "M. J. J." The act opens with me on stage alone telling the audience about the small celebrity Major Johnny Jordan, etc., and finally introducing him. Jeanne (costumed in red, with bell hop shorts and sleeveless brass-buttoned jacket) enters, carrying the Major, who has his coat pocket stuffed with big cigars, again for effect only. (A long time ago, a fellow in a nearby town and one of Ike Rose's midgets were friends. When the season was over Prince Pani, the midget, used to come and stay a few weeks every year. From watching them I noted that the "Prince" loved to be carried around, either by men or women, especially when he was the center of attraction. Also, he was always smoking the biggest cigars he could get.) Jeanne places the Major on the stand in the chair and then stands by his side, quietly, as an attendant. Actually, she manipulates the head and mouth, and, also, SHE DOES ALL THE VOICE THROWING but never says a word herself. I ask the Major all the questions, and he apparently tells all the answers. I can then be ANYWHERE on the stage with this arrangement. The dialogue assumes the form of an interview, as if he were a visiting celebrity. (Part of the audience doesn't know who is throwing the voice. Part of them think the Major is real, made-up like a doll. Jeanne has perfect lip-control and, besides, she is very small and inconspicuous.) Then, at the finish, the time comes for the Major to contribute his bit to the entertainment. He decides to sing, so Jeanne lifts him off the chair, takes him in her arms, and hands him to me. Then SHE EXITS and the Major goes into his song, AND I DO HIS VOICE FOR THE SONG, which closes the act. The idea is that we couldn't both do his SPEAKING voice, but to change for the song was okay, as there is a difference between anyone's singing and speaking voices, as witness the talkies dubbing in singing voices for their stars.

Well, that's it. Part of the audience is even more baffled when Jeanne leaves the stage. Not once in the billing is the word ventriloquist used. The act is simply billed as Major Johnny Jordan, "World's Smallest Comedian," and no extra effort is made to fool anyone. It is simply presented as pure entertainment, something like a corned-up version of a Ripley act.

Following Fitzkee's advice, we have made every effort to make an individual character out of the Major, even going so far as to write his history (for our benefit only), from birth until the present time – his age about 24 years.

So then, by Fitzkee's yardstick the act has:

Music . . . on and off . . . also the closing number.

Movement . . . instead of the vent and doll parked on a chair.

Youth . . . we are all fairly young.

Sex Appeal . . . Jeanne's cheesecake.

Personality . . . The Major's (and mine).

Color . . . Jeanne's costume, and the platform drape.

Comedy . . . All for laffs.

Harmony . . . Fair singing voice.

Romance . . . introduced by the Major talking about his girls.

Sentiment . . . introduced by the Major talking about his home.

Nostalgia . . . introduced by the Major talking about his boyhood, and so on down the line, with Pointing, Timing, Surprise, Situation (gags), Character . . . Conflict (arguing with me), Costumes, Grooming, all go without saying, and Up-to-Dateness. For this we have good old McMandroop shooting us fresh gags every few weeks to insert.

So you see, we have an INDIVIDUAL act that is EXCLUSIVELY our own, thanks to Fitzkee's book, the Stevens, and McAthy.

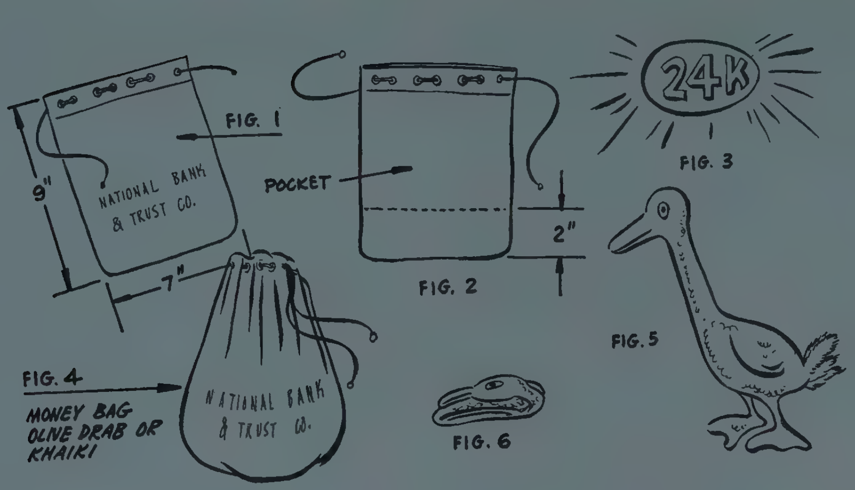
I thought you'd like to know how it all came about. It should help establish the fact that it is OUR act, especially as I have gone to great lengths to protect the ideas involved, billing, material, etc.

Second Prize: Money Egg Bag and the Goose that Laid the Golden Egg

by Tommy Windsor

Tarbell, (in Vol. 2), and Fitzkee (on page 162, *Showmanship for Magicians*), both recognize the fact that IF you are going to use an egg bag it should not be a little red cloth bag. I go further to say that if you want a climax to the egg bag you should not turn the bag wrong side out and make a flat chicken of the bag itself, because it tears down any idea of mystery you may have given the audience in your routine. For if you can turn the bag into a chicken with dangling legs, head, etc., you must therefore have had plenty of ways, means and room to conceal the egg in the first part of your routine . . . therefore it's really an expose.

Furthermore, says I (great Windsor), if the bag is only an innocent little cloth bag, actually unprepared, as you want your audience to believe, then why, oh why does it often have black linings while the outside is red, plaid, etc., and why does it have zippers, etc.,



etc.

This effect was actually (no kidding either), conceived from reading *Showmanship for Magicians*, and I picked on this effect for two reasons – first, on page 162 of *Showmanship* Fitzkee seemed stuck or "in a corner," as he put it, to find a masculine, everyday object to use as an egg bag. This, plus the fact that I have always (rightly or wrongly) considered myself an egg bag expert of a sort (see my contribution to *My Best*), and being in hearty accord with most of the principles set down in *The Fitzkee Trilogy*, and especially in *Showmanship*, this is what I concocted.

For the egg bag itself, the only common object that I could find to serve the purpose is or was a money bag, one like banks give their customers to carry change to and from the bank – not the big white kind with red letters, but the small, olive drab variety with the bank's name in neat black letters and with eyelets at the top and draw strings. As the bag itself was too long, I cut it down for easier manipulation. The size is now 7 inches wide and 9 inches deep (see figure 1). I got two, ripped up each and re-sewed with the partition or pocket mouth 2 inches from the bottom, (see figure 2). The draw strings, (at first I thought of them as a disadvantage), proved to be useful in that you could show bag empty and then as you give it to the spectator to hold, you simply draw the bag shut (see figure 4). The spectator holds the bag by the strings and therefore cannot look into the bag anymore and see that you have dropped the egg to the bottom. After passes, etc. you tell the spectator to open the bag and as the pocket is 2 inches from bottom, and open all the way across, they can then look into bag, see the egg, reach in and get it themselves. The usual material of this bag is excellent, too, dark in color in contrast to the egg. It is very serviceable and does not readily show bulges, etc. Also, it has round corners and is more easily manipulated.

So much for the bag. Then the question was, what could I do with it? Could I make a logical tie-up with an egg? What excuse could I offer for doing the trick at all? The Answer: paint the usual wooden egg yellow or bright pale gold bronze, and tell the story of the Goose that Laid the Golden Egg in a slangy modern fairy tale manner. It was perfectly logical that you'd keep a gold egg in a safe place, such as a money bag.

The story was about a miser who had a golden egg but was not afraid of its being stolen, because no matter where anyone hid the egg, such as in a handkerchief, etc., the golden egg would always turn up again in his money bag! As this is burlesque, a somewhat larger egg could be used in this case, which would make it more visible at the rear of theatre. Also it might have "24-K" printed on its side in big figures (figure 3).

In case the performer wanted to use these props in a routine where he had to break an egg in someone's pocket, or drop it on the floor, or in some other variation, a real egg could easily be dyed or painted with dye to match the prop egg.

To wind up the routine with a real climax a scrawny goose is made of toweling with a few feathers attached (figure 5). This could be produced as follows: At the finish of the routine you stand behind the boy who holds the bag by the drawstrings. The bag is shut and the egg has been vanished. You have the scrawny goose rolled into a compact bundle in your hip pocket (figure 6). You tell boy to honk like a goose. You are behind him, remember. He does so and you whisper to him (on the laugh) that he is to open the bag and get the egg. While you tell him this, take the goose from your hip pocket, hold it in your right hand against his back in readiness as he produces the egg. As he holds the egg you take the bag and say, "See what you did, you goose? You laid an egg!" This will get a laugh, and as they laugh you bring the bag in the left hand back over the boy's shoulder to your right hand and put the goose into bag. Now step to the side of the boy and say, "Johnny, how would you like to see the goose that laid the golden egg?" He says, "Yes." You produce the goose from the bag which he had examined only a few moments before. Finish with a timely crack, perhaps, that the goose could stand a little inflation.

Another advantage of this type of bag is in the zipper effect where an egg is dropped by a boy through the bag onto the floor, (on a paper), where it breaks, etc. This gets a big laugh but the zipper spoils the mystery of the trick. So, with this bag you could get the same effect as follows: Have the boy hold the real egg high. You hold the bag open – about a foot below his hand. Tell him to drop the egg into bag at the count of three. As he lets it go you pull the bag shut by the drawstrings, and the egg breaks on the floor.

So far as I'm personally concerned, and as a practical performer, I'm satisfied that THIS is a swell idea.

Third Prize: Topper & O'Leary's Double Deception

This contest entry is in reality the story of our show, "Double Deception," with which we have toured the West Coast, playing schools, clubs, colleges, and theaters. After some 200 shows in the past two months, we have discovered that the principles upon which the show was built are still pretty good. They are the principles set forth in *The Fitzkee Trilogy*. Since we have stressed new methods of presentation, but have not found it necessary to invent wholly new tricks, *The Trick Brain* has not proved quite as valuable to us as the other two books. The paragraphs below will tell how we used the principles in the other two books in building and presenting our show.

As indicated by the title, we have based the whole show on one of the main ideas in *Showmanship for Magicians*, the idea of having two PRINCIPALS, rather than one magician and one flunky. This has met with favor everywhere.

This brings up another point from *Showmanship* that we have found all-important: situation comedy is far better than patter gags. This is especially true when the situation involves a PERSON, another point brought out in the book. Thus, we get a laugh when O'Leary lights a borrowed handkerchief held in Topper's hands. The laugh gets much bigger when it looks as if Topper himself will get a manual hot-foot. We also use this for misdirection; for, while everyone is laughing at Topper's burned left hand, at the end of the trick the right hand steals away the gimmick unnoticed.

Another situation is when Topper is doing the Chinese Sticks. After the usual sucker gag, O'Leary again sneaks behind him, cutting an imaginary thread connecting the wands. At this point the trick seems to fail, as both strings hang from the sticks. Finally, of course, both tassels rise to complete the trick.

A third comedy situation develops during the rope routine. While the usual breakaway wand and fan gags get laughs, the biggest laugh comes when O'Leary appears on the other side of the stage, pointing a gun at the butter-fingered assistant.

Incidentally, one of the gags in this rope routine came, as suggested in *Showmanship*, from a straight comedian, not a magician. It was while watching Dick Buckley's gag with hats – switching his hat with a spectator's in rhythm – that we got the idea for our gag, as you-do-as-I-do done to the music "Together." Apparently the magician and the spectator each have two pieces of rope. The music begins slowly, the spectator following the magician's meaningless gestures quite easily. The tempo of the music then increases. The magician moves faster. The spectator becomes more and more confused as the music becomes faster and faster. Finally, the music ritards at the end. The spectator still has two pieces; the magician has one. This routine, used in night clubs before being altered slightly for our present school show, does with music what is suggested in *Showmanship*. Even in our present show, where orchestras are not available, we still use musical gags of this sort through the help of a Tonette (small plastic flute).

Playing before kids as we do, we have tried to use objects familiar to kids instead of the usual apparatus. We have taken our Phantom Tube, for instance, and have placed it inside an ice cream carton. The block for our Die Box has been repainted to look more like the toy blocks ordinarily seen by children. Our tables are four-legged, the main center table being a beautiful thing made of chrome tubing with a plain maroon top with no drape.

We have already told how the principles mentioned in *Misdirection* are used in the burned hank trick. Another example is in the opening. While Topper is allowing his Serpent Silk to "serp," O'Leary makes the steal on a fish bowl. Again digressing, this is one of the two main instances where we use coordinated action, as mentioned in *Showmanship*. Immediately after the opening, Topper does Clippo at the same time that O'Leary is doing the Repeat Cards. The patter is delivered in unison, both performers speaking together as the story is unfolded.

Our rabbit production uses more misdirection. The block used in the Die Box has rabbits painted on it. When Topper withdraws the block from the hat, the rabbits have disappeared, apparently proving it to be a different block. Topper throws the block to O'Leary, at this moment stealing and loading a spring rabbit into the hat. The rabbit is then produced by O'Leary.

But the boldest piece of misdirection comes at the end of the show, when Topper is faced with the problem of stealing a die-tube from the magazine cover which is about to reveal a flag no longer mis-made. O'Leary, off stage at this point, takes a last look at the book, and then comes flying out a side door, fists moving wildly, and yelling, "You can't throw us out. We have a contract." That, gentlemen, is misdirection.

Fourth Prize: How I Used Showmanship for Magicians

By Bob Degenhardt

First of all, I wish to take this opportunity to express my thanks for *The Fitzkee Trilogy* and the higher entertainment standard it has laid before the modern magician.

I believe I secured the most help from *Showmanship for Magicians*. Therefore, I would like to outline how I used *Showmanship* to solve my particular problems. I decided first that I must change the form of my act; I must have a plot or central theme throughout. The theme which I finally decided upon was one which would be suited to my personality. Everything I would touch would thereupon be endowed with life, (a coin would walk across my hand or a billiard ball would roll along my finger; a card would rise from the pack or a pocket handkerchief would untie itself.) However, in each case the trick would act contrary to the magician's wishes – instead of the magician controlling the tricks, the tricks would control the magician. A red ball cannot be made to disappear permanently. Even though it is thrown into the air or crushed it still reappears in its original condition. A rabbit can never be found in the hat when the magician wishes to produce him. A spirit buzzer refuses to answer questions and heckles the magician at every turn; "Buzzy" annoys the magician when he tries to sing, do a trick, or read a fan letter. A billiard ball changes to an egg whenever the magician tells a corny joke.

Rather than a haphazard arrangement of tricks, the act carries a central theme all the way through. This particular theme has splendid comedy possibilities. The business of theme was only the first of many problems which were to arise. I had to develop a style of patter which would lend itself to my personality, strengthen the act idea and gain the best response from the audience. This, like all the other problems, required research, experimentation, and rehearsal.

I have tried to improve every phase of showmanship in my act just as in the two examples which I have given. I cannot say that I have succeeded, but with the help of the Fitzkee books I have a better standard of magical entertainment to guide me. Magic cannot go to the top without a better standard going on before it, and *Showmanship for Magicians* and its accompanying volumes have raised that standard.

Fifth Prize: Bob Dowd's Collegiate Conjuring

Bob Dowd

Here is a finish for an act of the "Collegiate" type. It should be particularly suitable for club and hotel work. The general theme of the whole act is a college boy using pipes, pennants, and generally adapting apparatus which would be familiar in a college.

The performer arranges so that his table is clear of all props at his closing effect. This table is the standard "Table to Suitcase" item. As he finishes, he quickly picks up the table and collapses it into a "valise." The "bag" is seen to be plastered with various college stickers and pennants and as he strides off with the suitcase in his left hand he gazes searchingly back over his left shoulder while his right arm is raised with thumb pointing forward in the well known gesture of the week-end hitch-hiker.

Sixth Prize: William T. Reid, Judging Audience Reaction

After a "retirement" of about ten years, I resumed semi-professional practice of magic recently. Even though I had kept up interest in the art, my first two shows taught me that I had not kept abreast. I suffered some stage fright and the awkwardness of a beginner. But there was more! Magic had changed. Audiences had changed. Playing conditions had changed. I had not.

I found that I had one advantage. Manipulation, or sleight of hand, is (and was) my style. I do not have much to carry and I use no assistant. So, I tried watching the reaction. But, I was prejudiced in favor of effects and routines that I liked. I was too interested in what I was doing to be a competent judge; when I got home I could not remember when they applauded and when they sat on their hands.

My wife is a severe but just critic of my work. She is bored by seeing me practice and perform. Consequently she is an impartial judge. I plant her in the audience when I can; if I can't do that, she is back stage, always with a note book and pencil. She records reaction, locating it to the second. She records changes in routine and patter, with the reaction. And everything she can catch she puts down, strictly impartially.

Then we study the record. Why did they laugh at this point last night and give it a cold shoulder last week? Should I do this effect for a stag and that one for a mixed audience? And so on. Changing and polishing, not because of what I like or what I think the customers like, but from their recorded reactions. The improved results in my act are highly satisfactory.

I expect soon to be able to relieve her of this tedium, except for an occasional "examination" when I make a major change in the act.

I recommend this system to those who have someone with sufficient love and patience to so serve them.

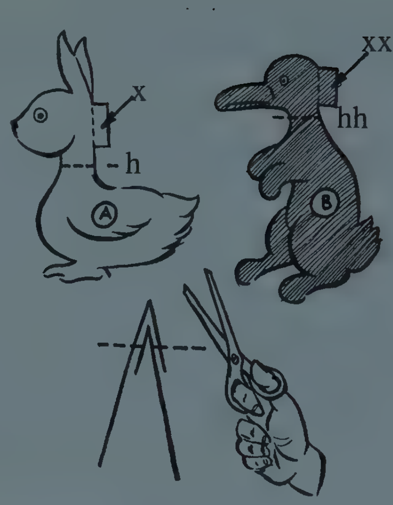
Honorable Mention:
Alfred Herremann's Duck and Rabbit Clippo

(This effect did not place in the Fitzkee contest, but we thought it worthy of inclusion in this feature. Most magicians are familiar with the "clippo" trick. The center section of a strip of paper is coated with rubber cement, allowed to dry, and then dusted with baby powder. The paper is folded in half with the cement inward, and with the fold located in the center of the cement coated section. About a half-inch of the folded section is cut away. Because of the dried rubber cement, when the paper strip is unfolded the edges of the cut paper sticks togther and the strip appears restored. – drg)

I am glad to send my contribution to your contest. It is my improvement of the CLIPPO effect.

I use two paper animals, about 18 inches high: a white duck with a rabbit head, and a black rabbit with a duck head. The heads represent both animals depending on whether they are held in a horizontal or vertical position.

The necks and strips are treated with rubber cement and baby powder as follows.



The backs of the strips (X) an (XX) are coated with rubber cement and powdered. The front of the neck of the white animal is coated with rubber cement for about 1/2 inch above and an inch below the dotted line (h). The back side of the neck of the dark animal is coated with rubber cement for about ½ inch above and an inch below the dotted line (hh). When the cement is dry lightly powder the cement.

Strips (X) and (XX) at the backs of heads are folded to be not visible; they are used later as new necks.

Fold the head of the white animal forward and crease the neck along the line (h). Fold the head of the dark animal backward and crease the neck along the line (hh). Unfold the two heads and you are ready to perform.

The two strange animals are shown with appropriate comments. Fold the head of the white animal forward and the head of the dark animal backward and then slide the dark animal inside the folded white animal so that the two creased edges are together, (the figure shows them a little apart, but the creased edge of the dark animal should be pushed right up to the creased edge of the white animal). With a pair of scissors cut away about a quarter inch off the creased edges of the two figures. When the figures are unfolded the heads have changed places by way of the "clippo" effect, but we have a black rabbit with white head, and white duck with black duck head.

The necks are now folded and cut once more, below the cemented area. Now the heads are completely free of the bodies. Unfold the strips (X) and (XX) of the heads and position each on the appropriate body so that when you cut them one more time the white rabbit head is now on the white rabbit body and the dark duck head is on the dark duck body. Everything appears restored.

The animals are stencilled on both sides of paper because at the finish heads are turned completely.

Could be, because of my bad English my contribution is not very clear, but it is a very good comedy effect.

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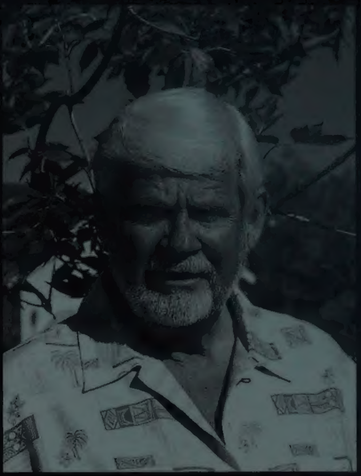

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David Goodsell is the recipient of a Literary Fellowship from The Academy of Magical Arts, Past National President and Honorary Life Member of the Society of American Magicians, and Editor Emeritus of M-U-M magazine, of which he was editor for nearly 30 years. He is a Member of the Inner Circle with Gold Star of The Magic Circle and has been a member of the I.B.M. and S.A.M. since 1966.

David holds degrees from Harvey Mudd College, Harvard University and The University of Georgia. "Dr. Goodsell," a title he seldom uses, was a school teacher, college professor and administrator, headmaster of three prep schools, director of a science education center and consultant, author and editor during his 40-year career in education.

Finding Daniel Fitzkee is David's second biography, the first being *As I Remember It*, the life history of his father, Harlan Goodsell. He has numerous articles in educational leadership, science education and magic to his credit, as well as children's fiction. He lives with his wife Jann, no cats, no dogs, no birds, no fish, in Orem, Utah at the foot of the Wasatch Mountains but returns to the southern California beaches of his youth at least once a year.

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